Smithsonian

September 1992

The Waters of Rome

Dolphins frolic on a fountain in St. Peter's Square (p. 88)

Just because you have kids
doesn't mean you have to drive a bus.

QUEST

NISSAN

You are part of a generation that has been raised and fed on 0-60 times, horsepower and skid pad

results. And yet for some inexplicable reason, the moment you have kids, car companies expect you to settle for some oversized, ungainly minivan that's about as much fun to drive as a bus.

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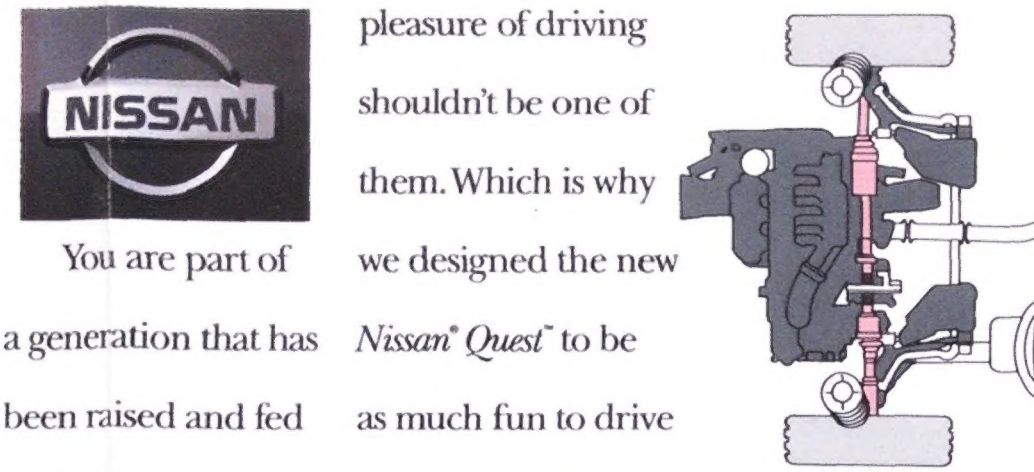
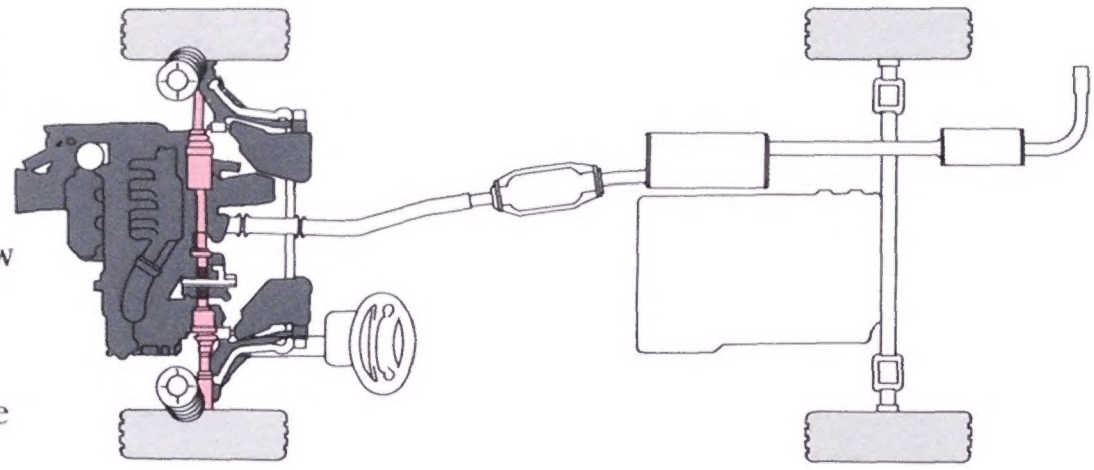
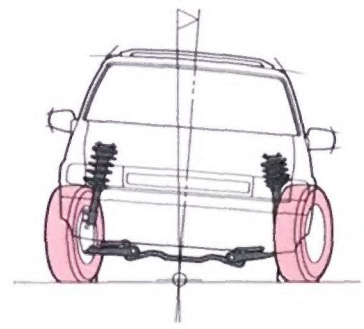
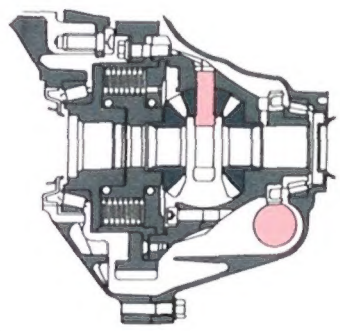


This uncanny feeling that you're driving a sedan is further enhanced by sophisticated front-wheel drive, and rack-and-pinion steering that offers you a quicker, more precise steering response.



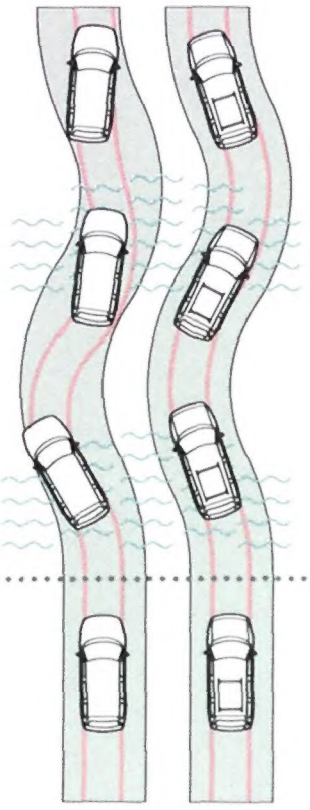


If you think the *Nissan Quest* has an appetite for curves, however, you'll find it's positively famished when it comes to hills. A 3.0 liter V6 overhead cam engine delivers an impressive 151 hp



and 174 ft./lbs. of torque.

No other minivan has more standard horsepower or



torque* Period. And it's the only import brand minivan to combine both V6 power and front-wheel drive.

The Nissan Quest is one of the few minivans to meet 1993 Federal passenger-car safety standards.††

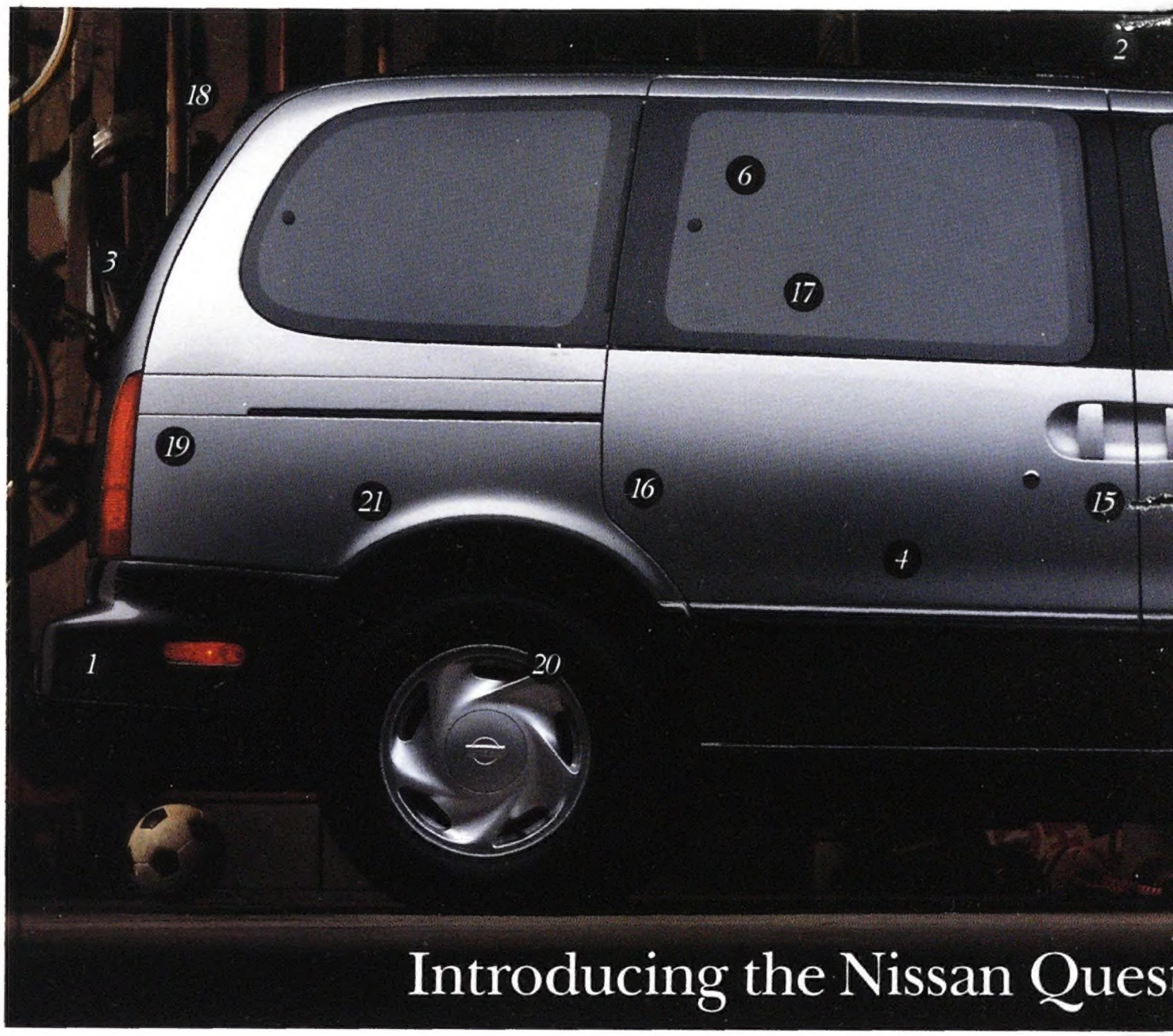
2 *Pillar/roof reinforcements help increase body rigidity.*

3 *Looking back on it, we decided to include a rear window washer/wiper.*

4 *Did we mention that the Nissan Quest comes with three body guards? Steel side door guard beams provide added protection in case of a side impact.*

5 *Several ingenious crumple zones have been designed into the Nissan Quest to help absorb crash energy.*

1 *It comes with front and rear energy-absorbing 5 mph bumpers.*



Introducing the Nissan Quest

21 *High-strength steel body panels add crash energy absorption capability.*

19 *We even included a cargo net to help prevent large items from falling out when the tailgate is open.*

17 *3-point seat belts may be conveniently found in outside positions in second and third row seats.*

16 *We've placed the gas tank in front of the rear axle to help protect it from damage in a rear-end collision.*

20 *Sophisticated power assisted brakes provide quick, sure stopping action.*

18 *A center high-mount rear stop lamp enhances brake light visibility.*

*Nissan Motor Corporation in U.S.A. Smart people always read the fine print. And they always wear their seat belts. *Base model comparison. **GXE model.*

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Quest

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September 1992

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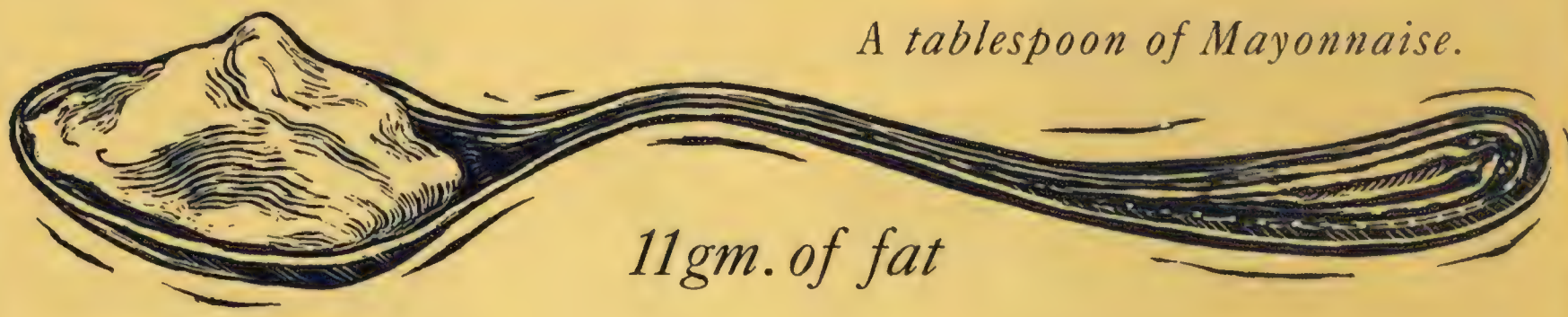
A tablespoon of Mayonnaise.



11gm. of fat

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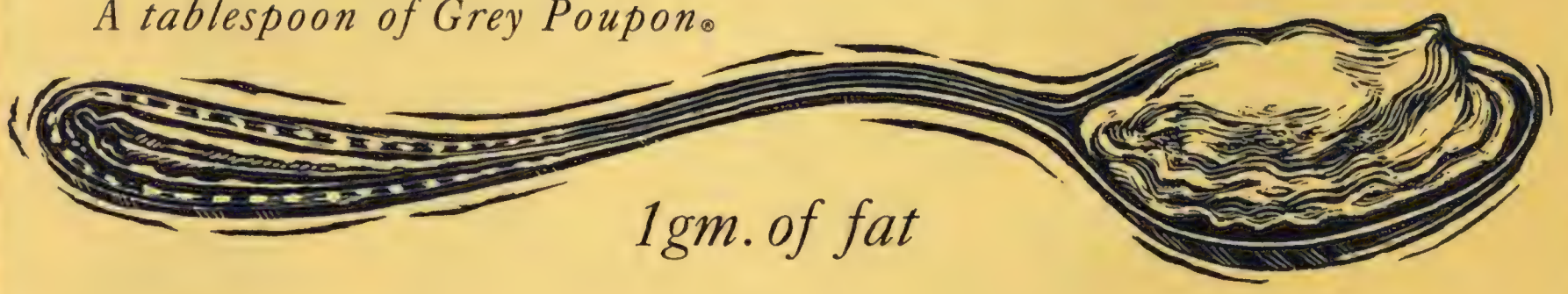
A tablespoon of Grey Poupon®



1gm. of fat

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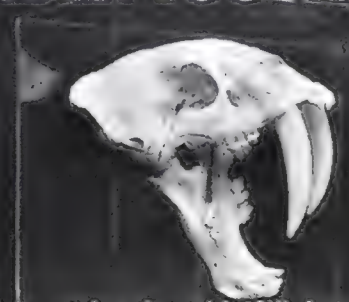

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Secretary Adams' comments

Smithsonian horizons

Birds can learn complex vocalizations and offer unique opportunities for exploring the neurology of behavior

Language is a symbolic means of communication. Only through shared understandings of the meanings of sound and sign clusters can we store, alter and exchange ideas, attitudes and general information. Apart from its purely current and instrumental use, language provides the repository for cultural traditions, distinctions, discoveries and perceptions that accumulate to our common advantage and then are passed on from each generation to the next.

But turn to the rest of the animal kingdom, richly endowed with its own highly variable vocalizations. To what extent are these freighted with intended information similar to our own languages? How far can we succeed in identifying in them strings of reciprocally understood symbols that are not instinctive but learned? As described in a new book, *Animal Talk: Science and the Voices of Nature* by Eugene S. Morton and Jake Page, our National Zoological Park is a setting for behavioral research into fascinating questions like these.

The answer seems to be that for most species the analogies with human language are pretty distant. There is no common pattern as to how other animal vocalizations are acquired; the vast majority of them are better thought of as mere signaling systems. Some play a part in attracting or arousing a mate. Larger and more significant, although less commonly recognized, are responses to threat or territorial intrusion. By counterthreat or subterfuge, the sender of the signal acts to alter the behavior of the receiver. Evolutionary pressures thus act simultaneously but differently on senders and receivers, magnifying both the effectiveness of the signals and the adaptiveness of the response to the bluster or misdirection the signals may convey.

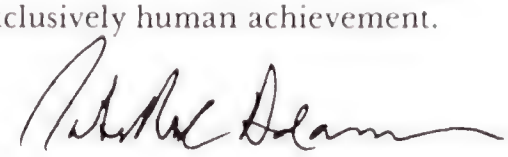
Birds, the most studied of animal vocalizers, provide a closer and more productive set of analogies for reasons that are readily understood. Flight puts energy at a premium, hence avoiding exhaustive or fruitless scouting expeditions for empty niches is advantageous. As a deterrent, especially in forested settings, sound signals from the first occupant obviously surpass visual ones.

Birdcalls, thought to be genetically programmed, may briefly sound an alarm or mutually identify chick and parent. Birdsongs in a number of species, on the other hand, involve a significant element of learning. They are far more elaborate than calls and sometimes of astonishing length. There is, to be sure, a presumably genetic predisposition to learn by imitating a member of the same species. With wider questions about the critical periods of neural development, it is important that opportunities to hear and experiment with mimicking the model occur during a particular phase of growth. New features are frequently added to the model, however, and in some birds, such as canaries, this creative variation continues into later life. The prospect for self-repair in the human brain gains credibility from experiments on canaries that have shown new nerve cells replacing older ones in their song-control centers.

A close relationship of birdsongs with mating, popularly taken for granted, usually turns out to be secondary. More often, songs are primarily deterrents to territorial intruders. This applies even to coloratura variability in the songs of some species, which might plausibly seem to be a form of self-advertisement as a mating prospect. A more mundane explanation is that such vocalization weakens the ability of a competitor for one's own niche to gauge distance as accurately as would be possible from a standardized signal.

Some birds, such as pigeons, deafened at birth or raised with other species, will exactly reproduce their species' characteristic vocalizations. Others, such as cardinals and some sparrows, need to refine the neural template they receive at birth by listening to themselves and to others. A great deal of progress has been made in accurately recording an ever-widening range of pitch of these signals. Clever experiments have shown, however, that birds sometimes respond quite contrarily to songs we would identify as either very similar or very different. Our own anthropomorphic interpretations are to be avoided, and the reception-perception sides of the signaling process are still very obscure and perhaps quite subtle.

As this suggests, one of the most exciting features of work on birdsongs is the avenue of entry it provides into understanding linkages between behavior and its underlying neurobiological mechanisms. As the only nonhuman animals besides whales that can learn complex vocalizations, birds offer unique opportunities for observation and experiment. But that does not imply that bird communications involve the equivalent of human languages. Language is an exclusively human achievement.



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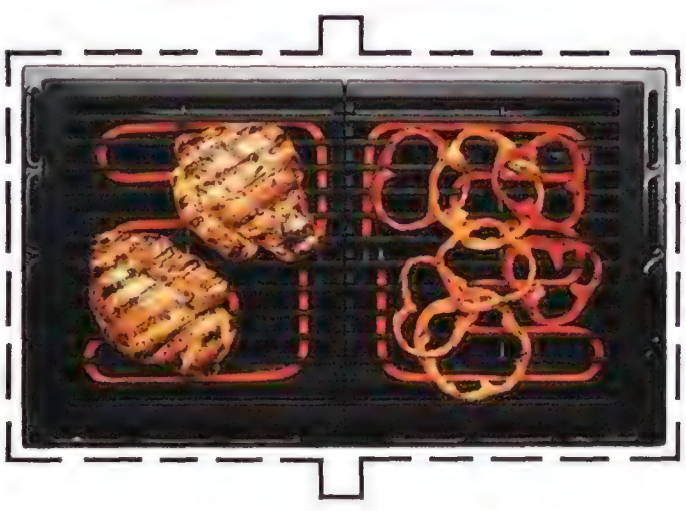

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Letters to the Editor

American Sign Language

Dear Sir: I once participated in a study of cultural change in a Yucatec Maya community where there were 14 deaf persons living among 400 other inhabitants. In 1977, Gallaudet's Bill Stokoe, featured in your July article on American Sign Language, answered a somewhat frantic letter from me: "Help, I am in a Maya village full of deaf people, they are signing like mad, what should I do?" With his guidance we managed to create an initial dictionary of Maya sign.

Later, Gallaudet's Bob Johnson and Carol Erting joined me for some serious study of the village and the deaf within it. I had assumed this community was a genetic anomaly, which my colleagues doubted, suggesting I ask if there were deaf Maya in other villages.

"Sure there are," was the answer I got from the Maya. "Would you like to look them up?" We found them as close as five kilometers down the road and went on to identify deaf Maya in many other villages.

An adviser to my initial project told me that when a group of senior anthropologists viewed preliminary film footage from our first Maya village, comments abounded on the novelty of the Maya deaf and their signing system, and that suddenly a voice had boomed out, "You're all missing the point!" It was Margaret Mead. "Never mind that you see deaf people signing. All deaf do that. What's unique in this village is that the *hearing* people sign too."
Hubert Smith
Selma, Oregon

Dear Sir: In 1876, on the American frontier, Capt. W. P. Clark of the 2d Cavalry was placed in command of 300 Indian scouts. He was amazed to find that his scouts communicated easily by sign, although speaking vastly different languages—Pawnee, Shoshone, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Crow and Sioux. Intrigued, Clark asked to learn the language, and did. After subsequent contact with other tribes, Clark concluded that signing was a basic language known among virtually all American Indians, enabling them to live and function in close harmony, sharing their cultures and, to some degree, their religions.

In 1881 he was ordered to visit many tribes and prepare a dictionary. The result was published in 1885. Then as now, little attention was paid to Clark's pioneering study. But Isabel Crawford, a Baptist missionary sent in 1893 to live among the Cheyenne at Elk Creek (in what is now western Oklahoma), obtained a copy. Deafened by quinine at 16, she used the book to learn the Indian sign language. She then moved, alone, onto the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache reservation. Using sign, she taught the Kiowa farming, gardening, canning and cooking, and gave her "Jesus talks," as well.
Leonard Sanders
Fort Worth

Dear Sir: I have seen Indian sign language—used by American Indian tribes before we learned a common language—used recently, when an Indian traveling in a car conversed at a stoplight with another Indian standing at the corner. In less than a minute, they exchanged quite a bit of information.
Mitchell L. Bush jr.
Ruther Glen, Virginia

Dear Sir: In the late 1970s I worked as a security guard in Media, Pennsylvania, at Elwyn Institute, an educational residential facility for the physically and mentally handicapped. One day, two blind-and-deaf geriatric women were quarreling over the arrangement of a display of homemade crafts. I watched in amazement as the debate heated up.

Each in turn would angrily grasp the other's palm and spell out her point of view with emphatic intensity. To my shock, they suddenly whirled in my direction and made the *C* sign on their shoulder, indicating a cop's badge, followed by the letter *J*, the sign the deaf residents used to identify me, "Joe the cop."

As I learned more about ASL, I became entrenched in what field-workers termed "Siglish" ("signed English").
Joe McElwee
Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania

Rose rustling

Dear Sir: "Willow water"—what is it? And can it be used to root cuttings other than roses?
Julia Darby
San Francisco
William C. Welch's Antique Roses for the South *advises taking one-inch cuts from willow branches, splitting and soaking them in water, "preferably rainwater" brought to a rolling boil, then steeping them overnight. Remove willow, soak rose cuttings in the solution, again overnight. The willow water may be used for initial watering of cuttings and for starting cuttings from other plants.* Ed.

Dear Sir: Many modern roses' fragrances can rival that of any old rose. Fragrant Cloud, Double Delight and Sweet Surrender, for example, have fragrance everyone can enjoy, as well as good repeat bloom and manageable plant habit.

Not all antique roses are fragrant; the dominant gene for lack of fragrance came from old roses used in hybridizing.

As to being more disease-resistant, old roses have had the test of time; the fittest and most resistant of hundreds of varieties have survived. In time, the new roses will likely narrow down to the best in much the same manner.
Tom Carruth
Upland, California

Battle of San Jacinto

Dear Sir: Your article overlooked an important part of the history of San Jacinto in failing to mention the role of Erastus (Deaf) Smith. A frontiersman who served as chief scout and spy for Sam Houston, it was he who suggested to the general that Vince's Bridge be destroyed. Houston entrusted the task to Smith and his boys. After the war, Smith was given his pick of fine Santanista houses in San Antonio and was honored posthumously by having a thousand acres of fine Panhandle farmland named "Deaf Smith County."
Steven R. Sandy
Columbus, Ohio
There is controversy over whether the destruction of Vince's Bridge was the idea of Houston, Smith or another

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scout, but there is no doubt about Deaf Smith's having served his general well and valiantly. Ed.

Dear Sir: My great-grandfather, Col. Henry Millard, commanded the 1st Regiment of Infantry, leading the right flank at the Battle of San Jacinto.

Afterward, when it was learned that Texas president David Burnet was contemplating freeing Santa Anna, the army held a mass meeting and passed a resolution to arrest the president, appointing Colonel Millard and a few picked men to make the arrest. When the news leaked out at Velasco, the commander there, friendly to Burnet, failed to carry out Millard's orders and the venture fell through.
Molly Smith Adams
Miami

Alaska Highway

Dear Sir: I served in Alaska with the 843d Signal Service Regiment from mid-December 1942 until about November 1944 as a high-speed radio operator stationed at various points along the road. Out in the bush we had our old campaign hats and netting on while those huge mosquitoes came out from their muskeg habitat to bite, bite, bite.

In addition to the standard Army chow, we had moose meat, bear stew and ptarmigan as a change of diet. The ptarmigan was OK, but as I didn't have a sophisticated palate at age 20 or 21, the bear and moose were a little too much.

When we were off-duty at Big Delta, we'd go up to Ladd Field to wonder at the civilized way the Army Air Corps and the Air Traffic Control lived. Buildings, PX, post theater, milk shakes and ice cream, beer and candy bars . . . But of course, *we* had the marvelous vistas of lakes, rivers, mountains and forests, and the wildlife and the gorgeous wildflowers so abundant in Alaska. When the northern lights were operative, radio communication would be out completely—but what a spectacular sight!
Fred Birnbaum
Croton-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Sir: In 1933 Slim Williams and his dogs walked from Seattle to Chicago. After their appearance at the Century of Progress World's Fair, they continued on to Washington, D.C. For part of the winter they camped at Shady Grove Road and Route 355 in Montgomery County, Maryland. Twice Slim had dinner at my parents' home in Gaithersburg. He had dined with President Franklin Roosevelt at the White House and visited him several times. I think FDR enjoyed his stories.
E. Edith Barnett
Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Sir: A telephone line was put in when the Alaska Highway was built. The poles were trunks of trees cut to clear a path.

I was a member of a crew working for Western Electric, installing the repeater stations. All material was shipped up by truck; batteries to run the power plants were shipped dry. We built fires to melt snow so we could add water to acid to make 500 gallons of battery acid. It took a lot of snow. All this was out of doors at –26 degrees F.

When the permafrost thawed in the spring, the poles fell across the highway, and with them, the line.
William Bramwell
Phoenix

Petrified footprints

Dear Sir: Jerry MacDonald's fossil footprints took me back to one of the lasting thrills of my childhood. A Girl Scout trip to Cranbrook Museum in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, was fine, but not so interesting as the prospect of a foot-long hot dog afterward, at the drive-in. That is, until we came to a huge footprint hanging on the wall. Close questioning of the tour guide finally convinced me that this, indeed, was exactly where the big dinosaur had put his foot.

After that there was nothing else in the museum for me. Sneaking away from the group and back to the dinosaur footprint was easier than disobeying the "do not touch" sign, the rock's only protection. Though it was slightly disappointing to find the stone cool and solid, not still warm and wet and soft, I cherish the thought of having secretly put my hand directly on the spot where the dinosaur stepped. My skin met his in my mind—*shivery!*
Charity W. Steere
Grass Lake, Michigan

The truth about trash

Dear Sir: Your authors claim we have "room aplenty" and "enormous tracts of empty countryside" to bolster their argument that we are not running out of landfill space.

As our waste volume increases, so does our cost of disposing of it. A major cost is and has been transportation; much of the "empty countryside" your authors tout as suitable for landfills is not anywhere near the area where the waste was created.

Also, as the citizens who live near that "empty countryside" and proposed waste site didn't generate the stuff, they don't want it dumped in their backyard. Their aversion increases if the waste is sewage, or hazardous or nuclear material. The disposal of these wastes is competing with garbage for all that "empty countryside" and "room aplenty."
David L. Bondor
San Antonio

Dear Sir: After graduating from Penn State with my degree in geography, the last thing I expected was to wind up in the landfill business, but here I am. Much of my time is spent either finding new places to site landfills or working to assure the regulatory agencies that their locations and operations are environmentally sound. The image that the United States is being buried under a mountain of trash is certainly false.
Linda S. Higgs
Monroeville, Pennsylvania

'It was a wonderful toy . . .'

Dear Sir: I was a G.I. in Barbara Holland's "glorious war," serving in North Africa, Corsica and Italy, and I found her cute little piece singularly unfeeling and offensive.
M. Hepburn Many
Mandeville, Louisiana

Dear Sir: Your essay took me back to those heady days in the 1940s when we kids could personally attack Adolph Hitler and Tojo.

My friends and I scoured the streets of Jamestown, New York, for nuts, bolts, nails, anything we could turn in for scrap that would translate into bullets and tanks to defeat the forces of darkness. During one school assembly at Washington Junior High, in a moment of patriotic fervor, I pledged my father's name toward $1,000 in War Bonds, to the accolades of my classmates. Father swallowed hard, but came through for me and the war effort, and that, I have always felt, was the final $1,000 needed to end the war with Japan.
Tom Weakley
Arlington, Vermont

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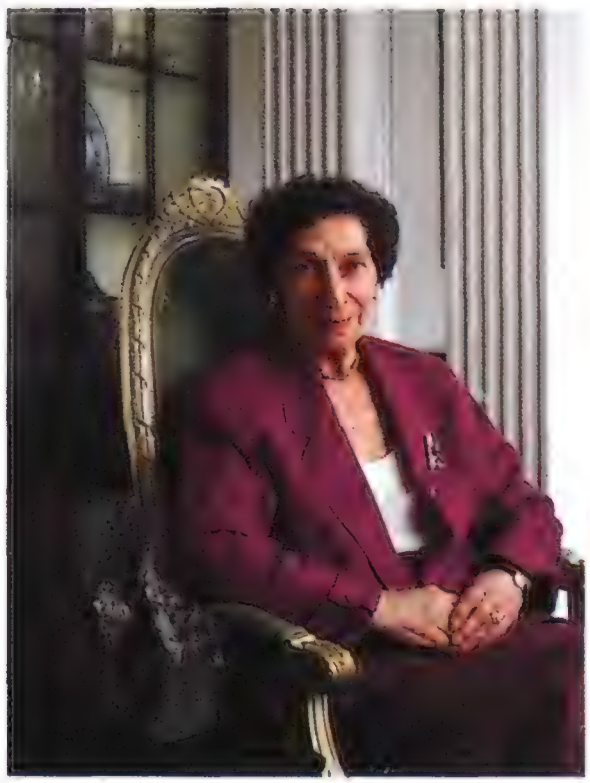

Lillian Turner has once again landed Smithsonian specimens on U.S. stamps.

New commemoratives feature minerals from the Museum of Natural History.

A ship is traditionally launched with the crack of a champagne bottle across her bow. So it's tempting to say that a new stamp is introduced with a lick on its bottom. But there's more to it than that: on the 17th of this month at the National Museum of Natural History, four new 29-cent U.S. stamps will require a ceremony before setting out on an ocean of envelopes. Special cancellations and a little speechifying will greet the new issue because its stamps depict four specimens from our Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals, which is slated for a face-lift (see *Mall*, January 1992).

Beautiful as they are, these stamps are more than just a show of some pretty rocks. The great mineral wealth of our land was a major reason why the United States boomed as it did. Three of the minerals on the stamps are metal ores, such as copper.

One of the new stamps pictures a sample of green variscite, a mineral of gemstone quality; it came from Utah and joined the Smithsonian 20 years ago. Another stamp displays a shiny chunk of copper crystals from the Keweenaw Peninsula of northern Michigan. Two other depictions are of ores from Arizona: blazing orange wulfenite, which came to us in 1969, and bright blue azurite, which we obtained back in 1927. That last was in the collection of the famed engineer Washington Roebling, who took over from his father the building of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Persuading the government to come up with a commemorative stamp issue is like shoving a tired elephant to make it join the parade. It takes huge effort, ingenuity, leverage, persistence, luck and, perhaps most of all, desire. The new stamps are here because of a backer with an abundance of all those requirements. Lillian Turner, winner of the 1981 Smithson Society Founder's Medal and an enormously enthusiastic friend of the Institution, says that over the past 30 years she's donated so many possessions to our museums that "the Smithsonian is like an extension of my living room."

Interested in minerals—and just about everything else—Lillian Turner began campaigning back in the mid-'60s for a stamp issue to celebrate the theme "Our Mineral Heritage." She tackled various government biggies, lined up all the clout she could and at last, in 1974, got the elephant to issue four stamps, depicting four polished gemstones from the Smithsonian collection.

The stamps were for the going regular postal rate of 10 cents (those were the days!) and pictured purple amethyst, pink rhodochrosite, tourmaline of a tasteful mixture of pink and green called "watermelon," and petrified wood, which often has a rainbow effect.

They were beautiful; also unusual because their designer, Leonard Buckley, who also did the new stamps, gave them a distinctive, and appropriate, diamond shape. People have always had occasional lapses and stuck stamps on envelopes crookedly. But these were the first U.S. stamps that you were supposed to paste on with one pointy end up, another down.

Some 18 years after that first issue, Lillian Turner renewed her vigorous espousal of minerals and again got the elephant to budge. Hence, this month's issue. How in the world, I wondered, did she find the energy? "I'm a natural promoter," she explained, "and I want to publicize the new Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals—so important for children to see."

The 1992 Minerals stamps are straightforward rectangles but considerably more colorful than the earlier Smithsonian selection. And as Mrs. Turner knows, children—and adults, too—find that stories about minerals and gemstones enhance their luster and often add a new dimension to history. Take the azurite stamp, for example.

It shows a mineral from the Copper Queen Mine, near Bisbee, in Cochise County, Arizona. In 1877, John Dunn, prospecting for water, found a lode of copper ore instead. Dunn grubstaked an old sourdough named Warren to get on the lode and claim it for him.

Fat chance. Warren wasn't the sort of person you'd buy a used car from, and he ended up owning much of the Copper Queen Mine himself. Then he apparently got drunk and, in good Western style, bet his entire share—worth some 20 million bucks—that he could beat a horse in a footrace. No miracle intervened to save Warren. He lost the race—and his fortune.

The Bisbee area, says my information sheet, is famous for azurite and malachite, both copper carbonates, the first blue, the second green. During the Renaissance, artists used to grind azurite

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into a powder as the basis for a bright blue paint. But over the years a gradual alteration into malachite has given some masterpieces a green patina.

You'll learn much more than this about the minerals and the stamps if you show up for their public unveiling at the Museum of Natural History's Baird Auditorium on the morning of September 17th. And at the doings you'll doubtless notice a lady flashing a proud smile. That will be Lillian Turner, shover of elephants.

Mrs. Turner lives in Maryland, a state with a reputation for producing forceful females. They range from Margaret Brent, who came to the colony in 1638 and, at a time when women were strictly restrained to home and hearth, became a shrewd businesswoman and political leader, to Barbara Mikulski, one of only two women presently in the U.S. Senate.

About a third of the way through the time gap between those two lived Anne Catharine Green, whose portrait by Charles Willson Peale (above) was recently hung in the first floor lobby of the National Portrait Gallery. You should give it a nod, not only because it's an early Peale, done in 1769 with great sensitivity, but because of the subject.

Peale painted only two professional women. One was an actress, Nancy Hallam. Why was the other Anne Catharine Green (no raving beauty, no household name)? One reason: she was a neighbor of his in Annapolis. Of mine, too—had I lived 230 years ago.

She came to our country as a little Dutch girl, and at about 18 she married Jonas Green, a printer who had worked for Ben Franklin in Philadelphia. He took his young bride down to Annapolis and became Maryland's public printer.

While Jonas produced the *Maryland Gazette*, among other things, Anne Catharine brought forth 14 children. The Greens laid 8 of them to rest and raised 6 in their gambrel-roofed house on Charles Street. Six kids and a printing press for a newspaper! No wonder it's such a sturdy-looking house.

In 1767, in midcareer, Jonas Green died. And his widow, still rearing her 6-year-old youngest, took over the entire printing business. She finished up the public jobs for which her husband had contracted, and she continued to get the weekly paper out on time. Gratified, the colony's General Assembly gave her the position of public printer

Maryland printer Anne Catharine Green sat for portraitist C. W. Peale in 1769.

at the same salary her husband had received: 36,109 pounds of tobacco, rising to 48,000 pounds in years when the delegates met.

I see her in my mind, stepping out a side door of her big, noisy house and walking along Duke of Gloucester Street to Church Circle, and on past the hill where the second State House was being demolished to make way for the present one (which looks down haughtily on our little house).

It was this hardworking woman who impressed young Charles Willson Peale when he returned to Annapolis in 1769 after two years of studying art in London. He was no stranger to our town. His mother had brought her family here after her husband died, and she set up young Charles as an apprentice to a saddler. He worked on Church Street (now Main Street) in one of several old two-story buildings near St. Anne's Church.

Young Peale seems to have been a friendly, outgoing youth, well liked by his neighbors. Jonas Green, once described as "purveyor, punster, punchmaker General, printer, and poet," had been a friend of Peale's father, and the widow Green would have been happy to see the young man back in town, now setting up an artist's studio. I picture her meeting him on the street and agreeing to his perhaps impulsive suggestion that she sit for him. Like Lillian Turner, like all busy people in every era, she somehow found the time.

As troubles with England intensified, Anne Catharine Green gradually shaped the *Maryland Gazette* into an even-handed journal of the times. Against considerable protest, she decided to end reckless mudslinging in print by refusing to publish anonymous personal attacks. Announcing her policy she wrote: "Pieces brought for the Press free from personal abuse, and otherwise instructive or entertaining, are gratefully acknowledged; but whenever they shall exceed the Boundaries of Delicacy, or be replete with personal invective, the Author must expect to offer his Name."

Though the Colonial government would have liked to see all references to rebellious acts squelched, she reported the proceedings of the First Continental Congress, the 1774 burning of the tea-laden brig *Peggy Stewart*, and the Boston Tea Party. The latter took so much space that she had to apologize to her readers for the fact that "the conclusion of the essay on the advantages of a classical education is postponed for want of room. . . ."

Green died in 1775, a month before the Battle of Lexington and Concord ushered in the revolution that by then she foresaw. Her portrait—one of Peale's first after returning from London—gained in importance after American independence. It will be on display until mid-December.

Edwards Park

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The object at hand

Pacific islands are represented by shells on this stick chart, but the Marshallese navigators cared less about relative distances than they did about the pattern of swells and currents indicated by the chart's wooden framework.

Marshall Islanders in tiny craft navigated great expanses of ocean by memorizing their stick charts

A fragile structure of sticks and shells, it looks rather like a neurotic kite. But it is a map of sorts, a navigational chart from Jaluit in the Marshall Islands, bought in 1900 by the Smithsonian, where it now sits among other artifacts of Pacific cultures at the National Museum of Natural History.

For centuries islanders in outrigger canoes found their way across hundreds of miles of Pacific Ocean, guided by their knowledge of swells and other natural phenomena, some of it represented by this chart's interwoven sticks.

Capt. William Bligh, cast adrift by the *Bounty* mutineers in 1789, took a 23-foot open boat, loaded to the gunwales with 18 men, a total of 3,618 miles across the open Pacific to the island of Timor in 43 days. But Bligh had a compass, a sextant, and a good memory of HMS *Bounty*'s charts and maps. Even Columbus had an astrolabe, a quadrant and a compass.

The native navigators of Micronesia—a 3,000-mile span of the Pacific that includes the Marshalls—were not thus equipped. They had no sextants with which to determine their latitude by measuring the changing angle between horizon and sun. Until fairly recently, they had no compasses either.

What they relied upon instead—and still do, to some extent—is an astonishing amount of lore about the stars, the location of islands and currents, the telltale flights of seabirds, the shapes of clouds and the colors of the ocean. All the information is memorized and handed down from father to son, enabling them to reach distant islands beyond their immediate ken.

The Marshallese stick charts, first reported in 1862 by a missionary named L. H. Gulick, aren't literal scale maps but intricate instructional and mnemonic devices for preserving information once known perhaps only to the Marshallese. While some stick charts indicate the relative locations of islands, most convey information about the appearance of swells in relation to land at various distances. Such swells, altered in direction by the land masses they have passed, serve as signposts to unseen islands—a phenomenon that Europeans did not fully grasp until the 20th century.

The chart on display in NMNH has small shells tied here and there along its asymmetrical frame, each one representing an island. Roughly at its center, two sticks are bent on either side of a straight one, forming a shape like the hull of a canoe. Shorter sticks intersect across them. Together they represent a predictable pattern of swells and currents between the islands of Jaluit and Namorik, a distance of more than 100 miles.

Marshallese navigators were so sure of their understanding of the information in their stick charts that they actually left the charts behind when they set off across the ocean. Ancient navigation techniques of many Pacific cultures have proved so reliable that anthropologists accept the notion that as far back as the 12th century, traffic may have occurred between Tahiti and Hawaii—islands separated by 2,220 miles of sea.

By day, the Pacific navigator trained in the old ways has things like a mast's shadow in the noontime sun to guide him, along with the knowledge of seasonal trade winds, swells and mysterious undulating currents that flow ceaselessly across the ocean. Where swells or currents converge, swirls of flotsam collect, acting as a further guide.

Trying to find a landfall from a small boat, bobbing along on six-foot waves in the trackless Pacific, sharpens the senses. To get the feel of the seas on the hull, navigators sometimes lie in the bottom of a canoe. But generally they perch between hull and outrigger, concentrating hour after hour with eye-squinting intensity on the tiniest shifts in direction, all the while keeping track of the time that has passed.

Basically, these navigators leapfrog from one island or reef to another, constantly trying to keep in their mind's eye what is called the *etak*—a known island or series of islands that lies to one side of their route. Islanders think of the *etak* islands as moving, the way farmhouses seem to move past your train window. The concept keeps them in the big picture, so to speak, of their particular Pacific neighborhood, knowing as they do the direction of every island

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from every other one—as well as which stars or constellations those islands appear to lie under from different points along the route.

Some islands are easy to spot—like Tahiti, which, at 7,400 feet, can be seen from 80 miles out. Even a low atoll, such as those in the Marshalls, may be visible from ten miles off. And if you can read the seabirds, you can tell if there is even a tiny islet within as much as a 50-mile radius.

White terns roam miles from land, circling and dipping for fish. But at dusk they abruptly head for the nearest island, never more than 30 miles away. If terns are spotted at dawn on the trip out, it is possible to set a course for where the bird has come from. The booby, which ventures even farther out, is also useful. It helpfully tends to circle your boat before heading home—in case you weren't paying attention.

Navigators learn other clues as well. The sea is a different color around land masses. Close to a reef, the water turns a light green, and waves are short and steep. A separate kind of underwater light can indicate the presence of land up to 100 miles away—especially useful on rainy nights, when visibility is low. Then there are the clouds, which tend to linger above land. They form curious eyebrow shapes or enormous Vs that point straight down at the island below.

In *We, The Navigators*, David Lewis reports a 450-mile trip from Saipan to Pikelot made in 1969 by his friend Hipour, who was from the Caroline Islands of Micronesia. The exact directions had been handed down orally for two or three generations over a period of 64 years, during which time the trip had *not* been made. But when Hipour reached a seabird area 15 miles from Pikelot, he was off course by less than 1 degree!

Hipour's peculiar knowledge of the sea came from a time when being a deep-sea navigator was an almost priestly function. Elaborate ritual accompanied departure on long voyages, including taboos on sex and certain foods before embarking. In 1947 (or thereabouts), a celebrated Caroline Islander named Winin made a long voyage, purposely ignoring taboos and rituals. After he came back perfectly safe, word began to get around. Since then, most ritual aspects have faded. But the lore of Pacific navigators remains, and so do the stick charts—though mostly in museums.

Michael Kernan

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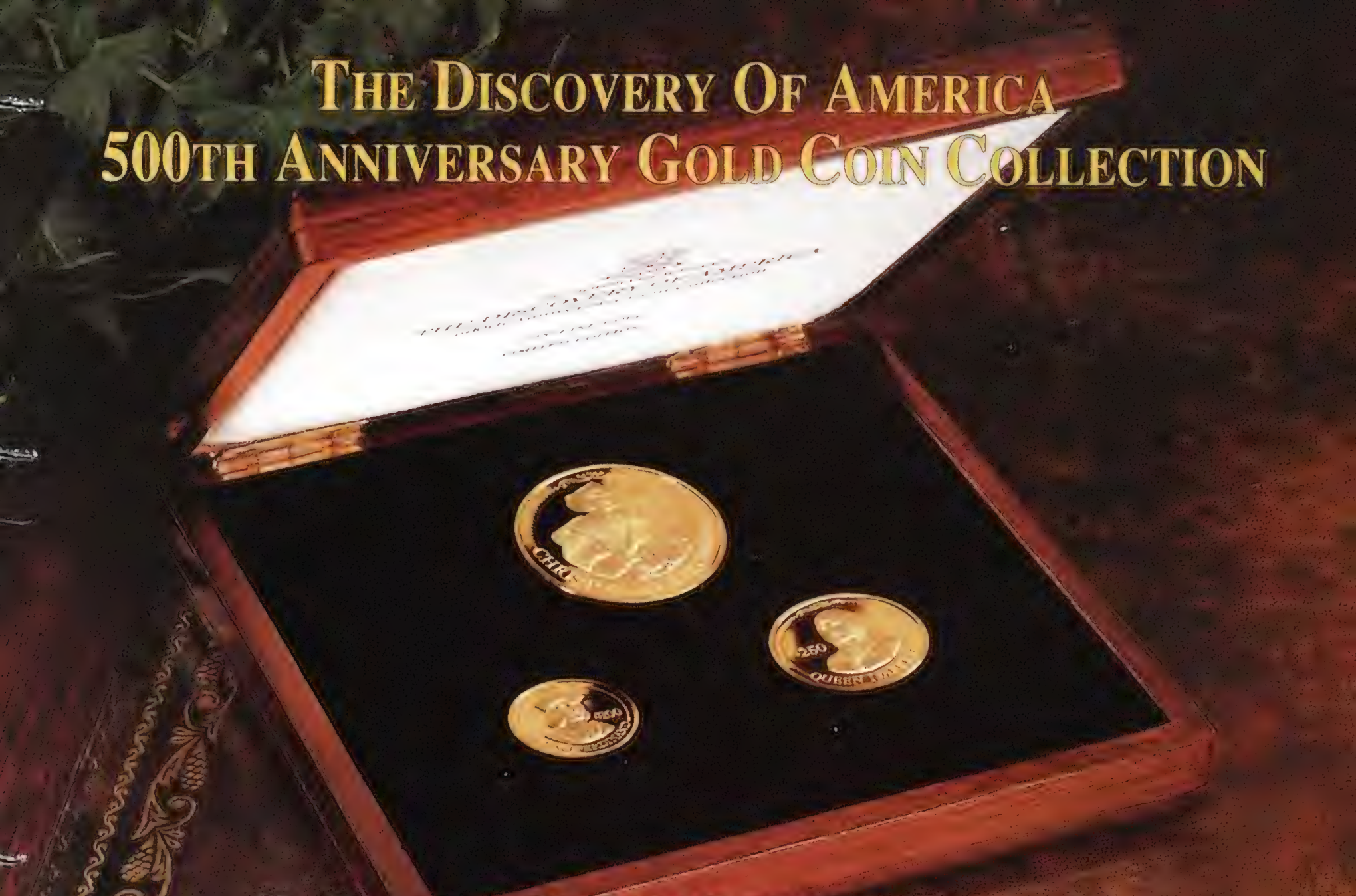

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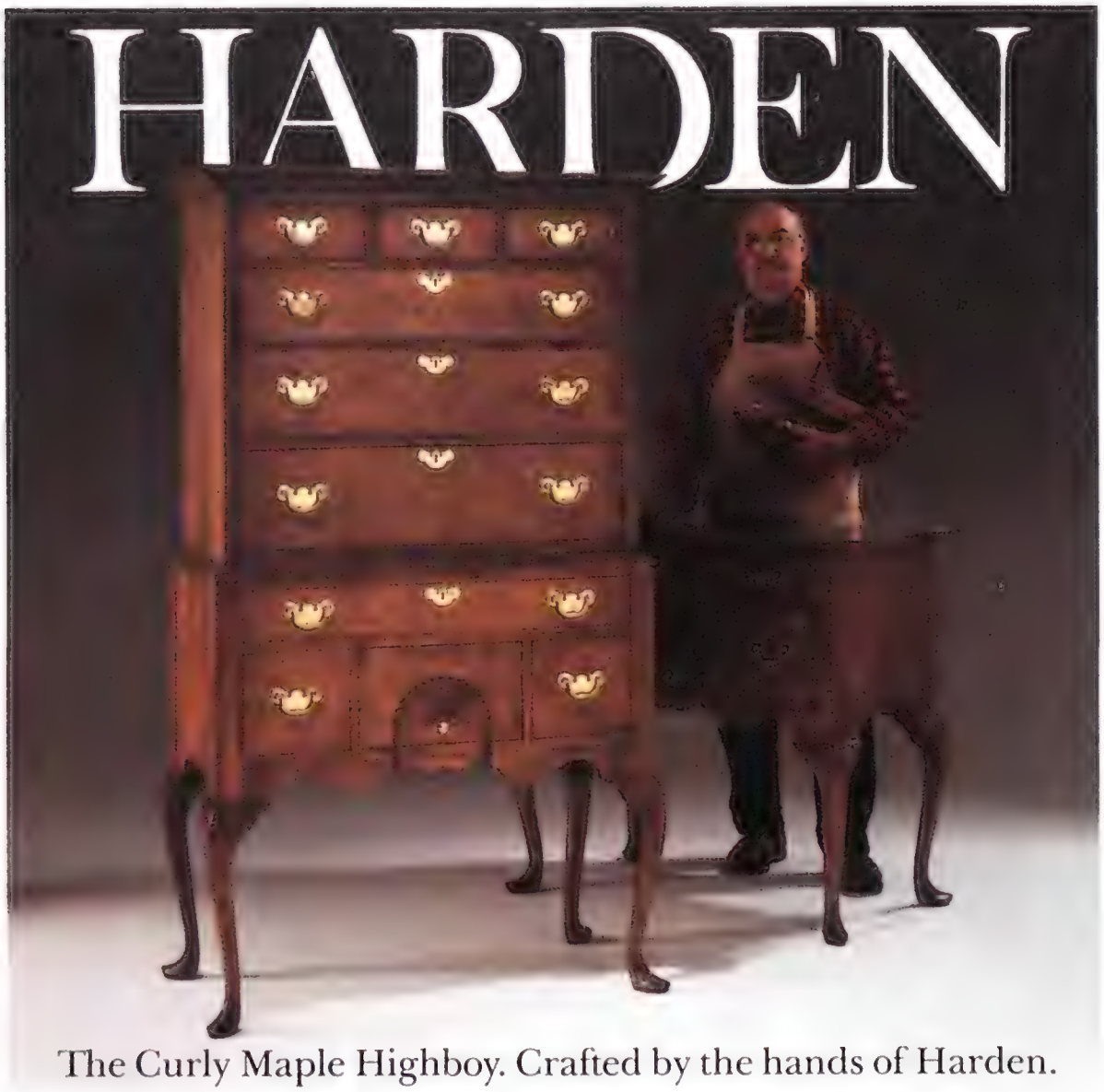

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Phenomena, comment and notes

Space telescope enables astronomers to calibrate a new cosmic yardstick that may reveal age of the Universe

If we are lucky, some things never grow old. Ice crystals falling silently to the ground in the first real snowstorm of the year; the sun rising out of the sea as we stand before the breakers, while behind us what was cold, colorless sand turns warm and golden; and the stars blinking on across the dome of the sky as evening twilight ends. Watching this last can be mystical. More and more and still more stars come out, until we are mesmerized. For a few magic moments we are one with the Universe. We can feel, though not understand, the unthinkable distances from one to the next, from us to them. An acrophobe feels an unholy pull down into that space that so unnerves him. The spellbound skywatcher wants to fall up in the sky and float among those blue, white, orange and red suns.

To the ordinary citizen outside on a dark night, the stars are the essence of inaccessibility. For me, that makes astronomy the most stunning of all the sciences: its practitioners can never get near the objects they study. We have gotten close to the planets in our own solar system, of course, in a series of flybys. But visiting neighboring planets, as opposed to even the closest stars, is like a walk around the block, as opposed to a trip to Asia.

When a spacecraft reaches the orbit of Pluto, for all practical purposes it is no closer to the stars than we are, sitting at home. And all the individual stars we can see are just the beginning, not the extent, of the Universe. All are mem-

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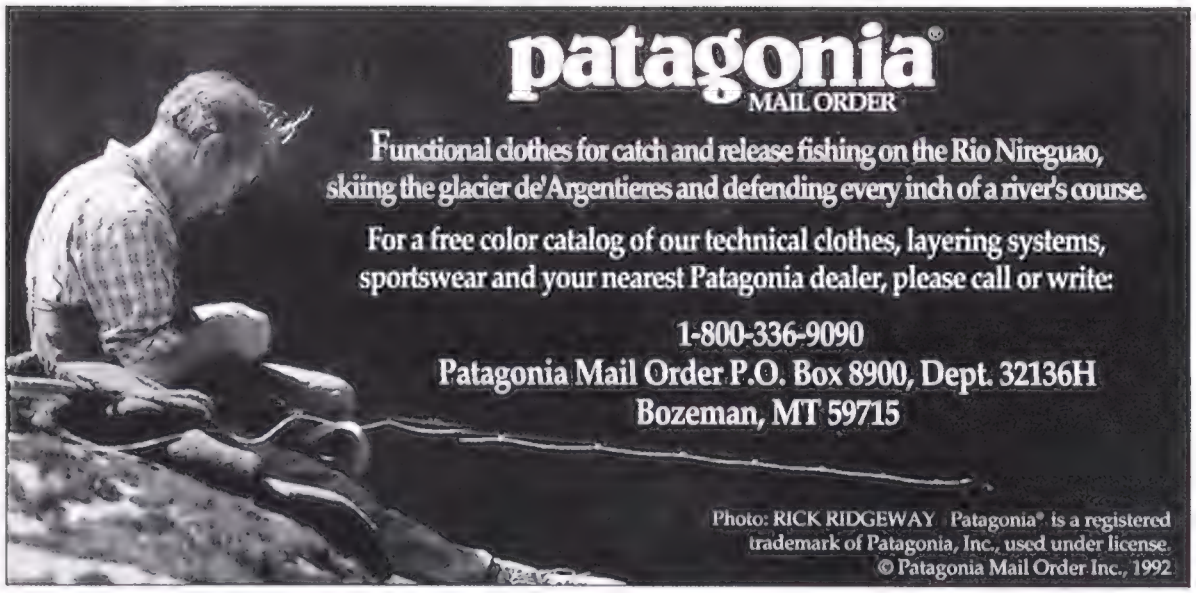
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bers of our own "home" galaxy, the Milky Way. We're still in the "neighborhood." With small telescopes we can see neighboring galaxies; astronomers with big telescopes can see billions of other galaxies, some so far away we are seeing them as they were billions of years ago. (Actually, residents of the Southern Hemisphere can see two small galaxies, the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds, with the naked eye; on really dark nights, those of us in the Northern Hemisphere can see one as large as our own, the Andromeda Galaxy, two million light-years away.)

Astronomers (or astrophysicists, to better describe what they do these days) can tell you anything you want to know, and a lot of what they want to know, about the stars we see and the galaxies we don't. But to me it is still remarkable that they can look at one of those tiny lights in the sky and figure out how far away it is. (The same kind of problem arises at sea. From the bridge, the watch officer spots a white light. But he has no way of knowing whether it is a bright light far off or a dimmer light much closer. It can be important to find out.)

We know pretty well how far away the stars are now, but we are still pinning down the distances to other galaxies. There is no simple direct way, so astronomers use a bagful of tricks. Different methods work at different distances, and one of the key steps is to make one such method overlap with another to extend the range of certainty. It is a little like dendrochronology, the measurement and study of tree rings (SMITHSONIAN, July 1985). Suppose you cut down a 500-year-old tree. You can not only count backward in time by counting the number of rings from the outside in, but you can see the good years and bad by the width of the rings. Now suppose you have a slice from a different 500-year-old tree—this one died in the same area as the first tree, when the latter was only 100 years old. If you can match the overlapping rings and find the same pattern of wide and narrow rings, then the second tree will take you back another 400 years into the past, telling you about rainfall, drought and other items of climatological interest.

Astronomers try to do the same sort of thing with different measuring scales, and it looks as if the Hubble Space Telescope, with all its flaws, has just made such a major matchup. The discovery, if confirmed, will enable astronomers to

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extend the distance scale established by one of their oldest and surest methods many millions of light-years farther out into deep space.

One of the best single accounts of how we have extended our ruler across the Universe is *The Cosmological Distance Ladder* by Michael Rowan-Robinson. It is a book written for physics students and tough going, but its overall explication is clear: astronomers use a series of methods to determine distances. It is not so much one ladder as a dozen, each nailed on about where the last one left off. The problem for astronomers is that some ladders are more reliable than others, so that by the time you get to the end of the chain of ladders, things are not half as accurate as you would like.

To figure the distance to the closest stars, it is simply a matter of high school trigonometry. We make use of a phenomenon known as parallax. Nearby objects will appear to move against a distant background if we move our point of view. The classic demonstration is a finger held six inches in front of your eyes. Look at it first with one eye, then the other. It will appear to move against the background. Then hold your finger at arm's length and do the same. The finger will appear to move again, but significantly less than before.

Astronomers measure the position of a nearby star from one side of Earth's orbit, then six months later from the other. The star will appear to move against the background of stars much farther away. Because they know the diameter of Earth's orbit and the angle through which the star appears to move, astronomers can easily calculate the distance.

At first glance, it would seem that the ancients—who used trigonometry—could have done it. But the angle of even a nearby star's parallax is very small, less than a second of arc. This is roughly the apparent diameter of a baseball seen from ten miles away. It could not be measured until the advent of large, accurate telescopes.

A star that has a parallax of one second of arc is said to be at a distance of one parsec. (A parsec, in turn, is equal to 3.26 light-years, or roughly 20 trillion miles.) The farther away a star is, the smaller its parallax. Thus a star ten parsecs away has a parallax of only one-tenth of an arc second. The method works only to about 50 parsecs.

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One of the most renowned yardsticks to the stars makes use of a class of variable stars known as Cepheids. (They are named for their type specimen, the fourth-brightest star in the constellation Cepheus, δ Cephei.) These are extremely luminous, giant stars that regularly expand and contract, becoming brighter and then dimmer as they do so. Some go through their cycle in a matter of hours, others in days. Harvard astronomer Henrietta Leavitt discovered in 1912 that the mean brightness of every Cepheid is directly linked to the length of its cycle, or period. Cepheids with long periods were brighter; those with short periods were dimmer.

Now, how bright a star appears to us here on Earth depends on two things: how bright it really is, and how far away it is. Leavitt made her breakthrough while studying Cepheids in the Small Magellanic Cloud, one of those neighbor galaxies in the Southern Hemisphere. Since all the stars were in the same small galaxy, she knew that they were all approximately the same distance from Earth, and so the differences in brightness were real, unaffected by how far away they were.

As a result of Leavitt's work, astronomers now had an invaluable new tool. By timing a Cepheid's period, they could determine its real brightness—its absolute magnitude. By observing it, they could determine how bright it appeared to us on Earth—its apparent magnitude. By comparing how bright it appeared to be, they could then calculate its distance.

Thus the Cepheids have become a "standard candle." Find a Cepheid as far out as it can be seen (until recently a few million parsecs), measure its period to determine its absolute magnitude, compare that with its apparent magnitude and—presto!—you have an accurate measurement of the distance of the star's home galaxy.

There are other methods of measuring distance, some of them pretty esoteric: statistically analyzing the motions of groups of stars; estimating the true brightness of stars and then gauging their distance by their apparent brightness; doing the same for the novas, stars that suddenly brighten many magnitudes. Turning to the much more distant galaxies, distance is inferred from the luminosity of the globular clusters that typically surround them, from the brightest individual stars visible in them or

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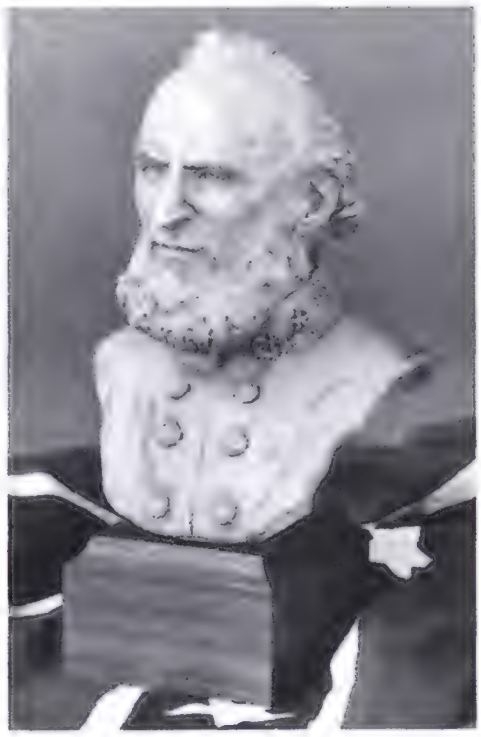

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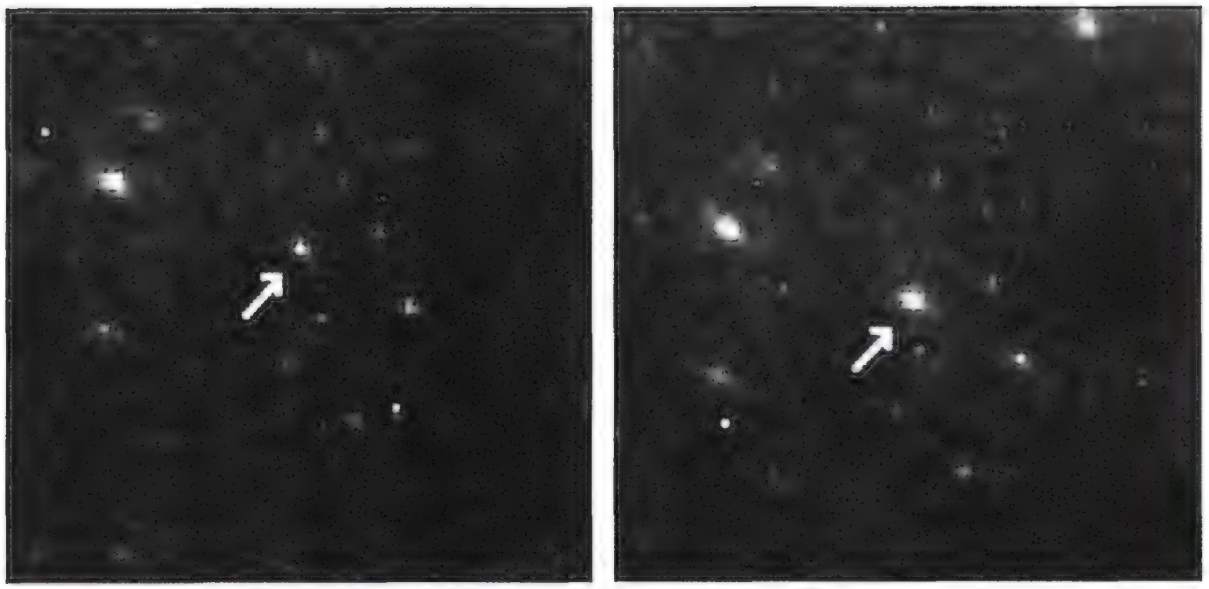
from the luminosity-color relationships of whole galaxies themselves.

In his book, Rowan-Robinson lists seven primary methods of measuring astronomical distance—those that give indisputable results; and another eight methods he considers secondary or even tertiary in their reliability. One method that has been considered uncertain is the use of a type of those stellar explosions known as supernovas to give the distance to another galaxy. They are easily seen in other, relatively nearby, galaxies; in fact, all of the supernovas we have seen since 1604 have been in other galaxies. The closest came in 1987, when one occurred in one of our own satellite galaxies, the Large Magellanic Cloud (SMITHSONIAN, April 1988). The exploding stars used as distance markers are known as Type Ia supernovas, believed to be the explosions of white dwarf stars. More important, they are believed for theoretical reasons to all reach the same absolute magnitude. If we could accurately measure the distance to just one Type Ia supernova, we would be able to calculate what that absolute magnitude is from its apparent magnitude. Once we established the absolute magnitude of a Type Ia, then we could determine the distance to all future white dwarf explosions simply by measuring their apparent magnitude. We would obviously also have the distance to the galaxies in which they were located.

The news is that the Hubble observations have managed to nail that ladder to one of the best we have, the Cepheid variables. Back in 1937, a Type Ia supernova was seen in a small galaxy known as IC 4182, in the constellation Canes Venatici. Now the Hubble Space Telescope has picked up 27 Cepheids there, and by simply measuring their periods we can establish their absolute magnitudes. By then measuring how bright they appear to be, we can know how far away they are. (Preliminary calculations give the distance as 5 million parsecs, or 16 million light-years.) This knowledge enables us to calibrate the scale for the Type Ia supernovas. These are so intrinsically bright that they can be seen millions of parsecs farther out than can even the brightest Cepheid, increasing our range by at least a factor of ten.

Such studies are aimed not only at telling us the distance scale of the Universe, but its age. We know the



Arrows point to Cepheid variable in a distant galaxy. The time such a star takes to go from dim to bright (five days in this case) reveals its distance from Earth.

Universe is expanding; galaxies are all moving away from one another. And we know that the farther away a galaxy is, the faster it is moving away from us. The farthest ones we can see are moving at substantial fractions of the speed of light. Light coming from an object that is moving rapidly away from us is shifted toward the red, longer-wavelength end of the visible spectrum. The individual peaks that represent certain elements in the spectrum are found at longer wavelengths in the rapidly receding galaxies than they are in light coming from a body at rest. That difference has come to be known as the red shift. These recession velocities are measured in kilometers per second.

The increase in speed with distance is a number that astronomers have been trying to find for decades. It is known as the Hubble Constant, in honor of the astronomer who discovered that all the galaxies are moving away from one another (the space telescope is named for him, too, of course). Astronomers such as Allan Sandage have spent their careers trying to determine the numerical value of the Hubble Constant, the number of kilometers per second that recessional velocity increases with each megaparsec (million parsecs) of distance.

If we know how fast the other galaxies are receding, and if we can now find out how far away they are, we will come up with a value for the Hubble Constant. Then we could find the distance to every galaxy by its red shift alone, run the film of the Universe's history back to the Big Bang, which started it all, and determine how old the Universe is. The lower the Hubble Constant, the older the Universe and the more time the galaxies have taken to get where they are. Marrying the Cepheid and supernova Ia distance ladders could be a major step in determining the Hubble Constant and answering that fundamental question.

Sandage and like-minded colleagues have calculated from the IC 4182 results that the Hubble Constant is about 45, and that therefore the Universe is about 15 billion years old. Others argue that IC 4182 is really closer (their contention is that intervening dust made the Cepheids appear dimmer than they really are), the Hubble Constant is larger, and therefore the Universe is considerably younger. Some calculations, in fact, end up with the Universe being younger than some of the stars in it, an awkward position at best.

The link between Cepheid variables and Type Ia supernovas may turn out to be as powerful an extension of our measuring capabilities as astronomers now hope. Or problems may arise, leaving us with less than 100 percent confidence. What will not change is the link's illustration of the power of the human mind. Using the same intellect that is hard-pressed to remember how old the children are, we have managed to build mental ladders out into interstellar, and then intergalactic, space, to take the measure of galaxies fleeing at ever increasing speeds into ever enlarging space, to find out how old the Universe itself is. It will always be magical to tip our heads back and look up as the stars come out. But it is also pretty impressive to know that other people have looked up, asked questions—and gotten the answers.

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The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, 1100 15th St, NW, Box F, Wash., DC 20005. 1-800-538-2692.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Good Medicine For Containing Health Costs.

By Jim Doherty

When folks say 'cutting edge' at the Nez, they don't mean saws

They mean wilderness and recreation; at Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho, rangers don't just sit back and get the wood out

A couple of decades before he became famous as the author of *A Sand County Almanac*, and not long before his death in 1948, the conservationist Aldo Leopold formulated a deceptively simple rule of thumb for deciding whether something is good or bad for the land. "A thing is right," he reasoned, "when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

I was reminded of Leopold and his land ethic recently when I flew over Idaho's Nez Perce National Forest in the company of another philosopher from the Midwest who is likewise committed to looking at the big picture. Mike King is the supervisor of "the Nez," as his forest is referred to by its friends. A native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, he went to school in Michigan and Oregon, zipped up the career ladder at the U.S. Forest Service and served a stint in its Washington office before assuming his present post in the summer of 1991. He's not an old-style forester. He's a new-style manager, steeped in what the bureaucrats call "executive preparedness" and well versed in the technicalities and legalities of environmental protection. Mustachioed, of medium height, he's also a fitness freak who runs five miles a day, which may account for the fact that although he's almost 46, there are times when he looks like he's about 14.

Now is one such time. After taking off from the half-pint airport at Grangeville (pop. 3,470), not far from the Nez's headquarters on East Main Street, we are approaching a cruising altitude of 8,000 feet. Our plane is a four-passenger Cessna Turbo 206, piloted by the imperturbable Frank Hill, who has been flying in and out of the bush for several decades. This is supposed to be an orientation flight for the visiting journalist. King is fidgeting over a thick book of maps on his lap, firing questions at Hill and pointing out landmarks for me. He is excited. He's having fun.

Off to our left, that glowing infinity of golden wheatfields rolling north and west toward Washington is the Camas Prairie. Straight ahead, menacing the sun like the teeth of a purplish crosscut saw, are the Bitterroot Mountains. Punching above the distant horizon on our right is the 8,345-foot pile of rock known as Gospel Peak. Beyond it, to the south and west, loom the forbidding ramparts of the Seven Devils. It's about 125 air miles from the Montana border up there in the Bitterroots back to the Devils. Nearly all of the land in between—this immense jumble of knife-edged ridges, craggy saddles, gleaming lakes, chalky bluffs and twisting arroyos—that's the Nez.

Here, in an area about two-thirds the size of Connecticut, you can find everything from parched desert lands complete with prickly pear cactus and rattlesnakes to piney mountaintops where the annual snowfall exceeds ten feet. The Nez features North America's deepest gorge (Hells Canyon), a half-dozen brawny rivers (including the Rapid, the Selway, the Salmon and the South Fork of the Clearwater) and a million acres of officially designated wilderness. It's not just a national forest; it's a national treasure.

You want elk, moose, cougars, bighorn sheep and bears? Salmon and steelhead? Whitewater rafting, backpacking, cross-country skiing? It's all here.

You want history? Look no farther. The Nez is a cross-section of the saga of the West. When Lewis and Clark passed through these parts, the Nez Perce Indians were on hand to greet them. A fabled gold rush took place here. There were old-time lumberjacks

The Red River hurtles down its rocky bed in eastern part of the Nez, where scenes like this are common.

Photographs by Tom Ives

Today about half of the 2.2-million-acre forest is set aside as wilderness, where logging, road building and other disruptive activities are forbidden. The small square (center) is not a part of the national forest.

and cattlemen who feuded with sheep ranchers. Gertrude Maxwell, a former teacher, outfitter and guide in the Elk City area, remembers when vigilantes led by her father meted out frontier justice at the end of a rope.

Maybe you just want to get away from it all. No problem. Driving around one afternoon, I happened across a trail meandering along a creek called Bargamin that will whisk you straightaway to paradise—fast-running waters, moosey wetlands and some of the lonesomest valleys you'll ever see. There are thousands of jumping-off spots like that in the Nez.

The place is special for yet another reason. There are 155 national forests. They occupy nearly 200 million acres of land in 40 states. At a time when many of them are catching hell from environmentalists for cutting too much timber and messing up too much land and water in the process, the Nez is widely perceived as a national forest that works. It is held in such high regard mainly because it is not content to just sit back and get the wood out. The Forest Service has been paying lip service to the concept of "multiple use" for years. In the Nez, maintaining a prudent balance between exploitation, recreation and preservation is more than talk. It's real.

"The Nez has been blessed in recent years with strong, savvy leadership," says Dennis Baird, a prominent Idaho environmentalist who runs what you might call a wine-and-cheese boutique in Moscow, a university town about 100 miles northwest of Grangeville. "The people don't lie to you, and they've been able to fight off some pretty sleazy politics."

Conservationists have not always been so complimentary. For a long time, in fact, the Nez operated pretty much like any other national forest. Loggers, miners and ranchers usually got what they wanted, and Idaho's Congressional delegation was ever alert to complaints from constituents back home about unreasonable restrictions.

Today local towns and industries still depend on the forest for a livelihood, but the emphasis is shifting

A member of the Board of Editors, the author has been writing about and "recreating" in national forests and other public lands for many years.

dramatically. Logging is down; recreation is up. More than 15,000 hunters invade the Nez each fall, hauling their elaborate gear and pack animals behind them. Fishermen come from all over the country to test the Nez's fabled waters. In the summer, rafting and jet-boating attract tens of thousands, and backpacking wilderness worshipers converge in droves on the Gospel-Hump, the Frank Church-River of No Return and the Selway-Bitterroot.

The Nez has been producing around 85 million board feet of timber annually—not an insubstantial amount, by any means, but far below the level stipulated in its long-range plan. Although the politics of running the place remain as feverish as ever, nowadays a typical special-interest conflict is likely to pit kayakers against jet-boaters or backpackers against backwoods pilots—a far cry from the kinds of concerns Gifford Pinchot had in mind when he became chief forester in 1898.

It was time for conservation

A branch of the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service observed its centennial last year. It was established in response to widespread public indignation over the havoc wrought in the woodlands of the upper Midwest by the so-called lumber barons. Its purpose was to protect watersheds and conserve timber. Under Pinchot's gung-ho leadership, and with the enthusiastic backing of President Theodore Roosevelt, it became one of the most dedicated and admired of all federal agencies.

Pinchot decreed that the Forest Service's priorities were to fight fires and make sure resources were used wisely. He put in place a dynamic organization, insulated from political interference, that worked not from the top down but from the bottom up. It became axiomatic in the Forest Service that "the ranger knows best."

Rangers had to be tough and self-reliant. Job candidates in Montana's Bitterroot Valley were required to demonstrate that they could use a compass, shoot, chop wood, pack a horse or mule, and travel in the wilds by day or night. They also had to pass two other tests, Pinchot recalled in his memoirs. The first was to cook a meal. The second was to eat it.

Pinchot's straight-arrow operation worked fine as long as the national forests weren't required to produce much in the way of timber and other commodities. Prior to World War II, there was so little logging that trees were selected individually for harvest and stamped with a U.S. brand. Clear-cutting in large blocks didn't become common practice until the late 1950s. By then, however, the demand for lumber had skyrocketed, and several things happened more or less simultaneously. The ranger-knows-best credo went out the window. Congress began calling the shots. The Forest Service changed from a conscientious steward to a harried purveyor.

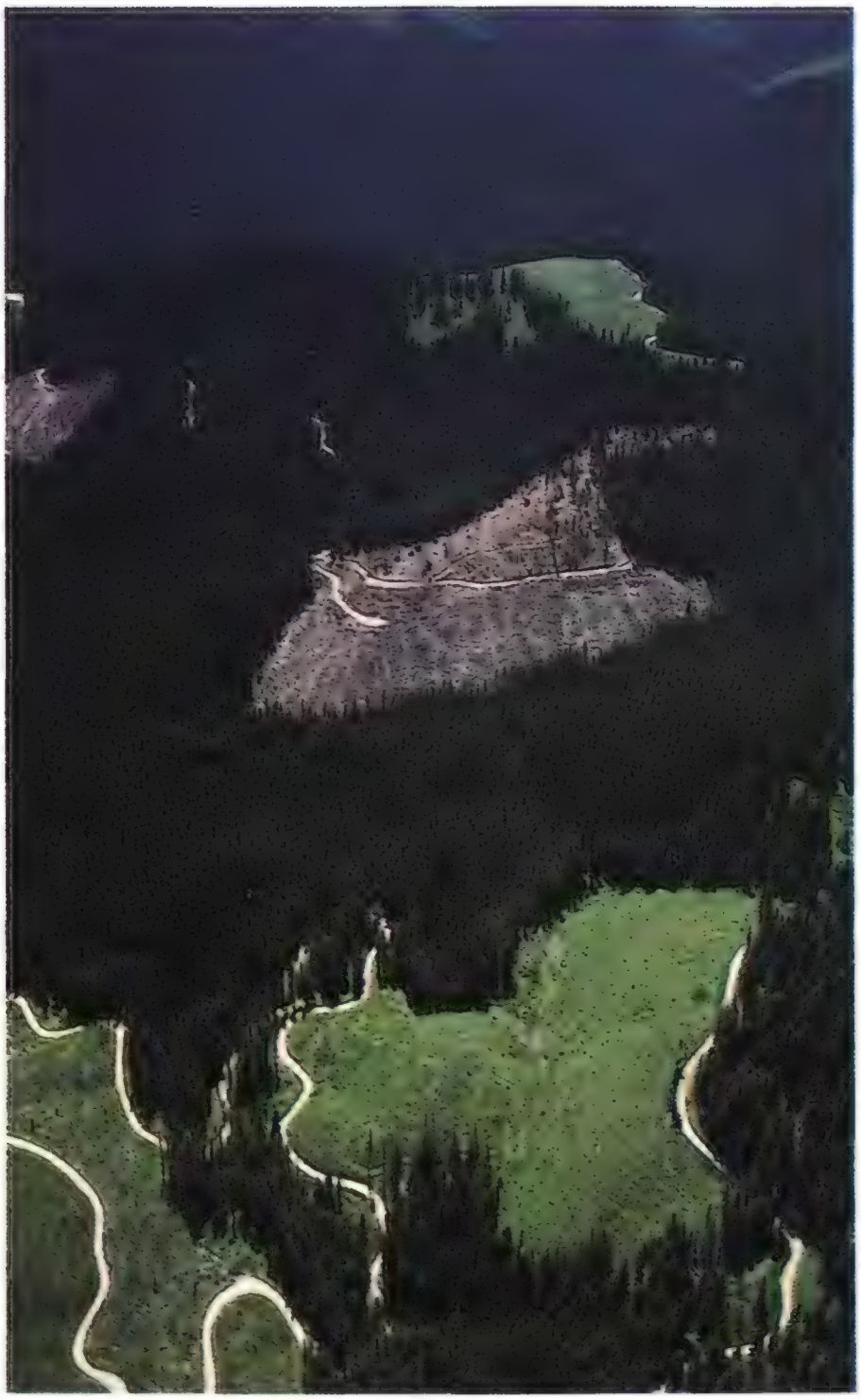
The era of the timber beast coincided with a sharp upturn in recreational use of the forests, and it wasn't long before conservationists and others who valued trees for their own sake began to get seriously exercised. There were plenty of fiascoes to fuel their indignation, especially in the highlands of the West, where overcutting, erosion and water pollution were rampant. The current imbroglios over the Northern spotted owl and chinook salmon in the Pacific Northwest are only the latest in a long series of pitched battles, many of which have ended up in court.

Congress responded to all this in a couple of ways. It passed a slew of laws requiring the Forest Service to clean up its act and set aside large areas for recreation and wilderness. At the same time, it continued to call for more and more timber.

To help figure out how to comply with those conflicting demands, the Forest Service hired a cadre of specialists. These engineers, soil scientists, hydrologists, biologists and other "ologists" now constitute half of the agency's professional work force. Unlike the traditional foresters who ran the show for decades, they bring to their tasks an ecological perspective. They aren't interested in serving the wood industry. They're

Nez supervisor Mike King wants land-use decisions based on scientific data gathered in the field by staff.

A raft pitches through rapids (above) on Salmon River near Riggins, self-styled "float capital of USA."



Clear-cuts and roads scar hillsides in Selway district. The Nez is now emphasizing lower-impact alternatives.

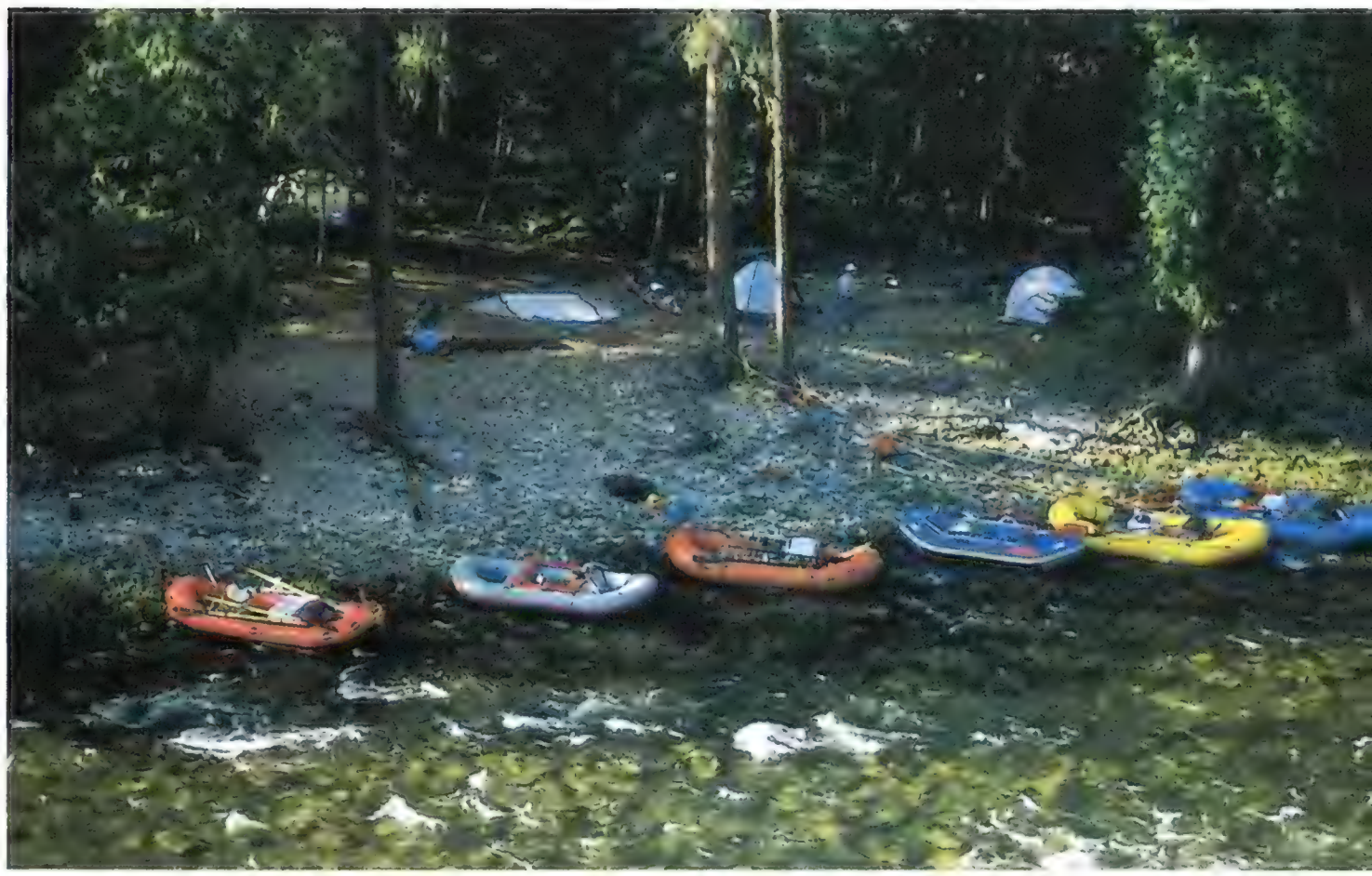
interested in the "integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community." Consequently, out in the field where the work gets done, more than a few national forests are turning over a new leaf.

The Nez has been undergoing a not-so-quiet revolution of its own for more than a decade now. Its managers are committed to logging techniques that are kinder and gentler—and less productive. They're putting money and manpower into the rejuvenation of degraded streams and spawning grounds, using fire to regenerate thousands of acres of decadent elk habitat and establishing tough new standards for wilderness management. "There's more stuff going on down there than any one person can even begin to keep track of," Mike King grumbles good-naturedly on the way back to Grangeville.

We fly directly over several conspicuous scars from the late 1960s or early '70s—huge clear-cuts that appear to be suspended from ridgetop roads like diapers hanging on a line. King doesn't frown, exactly, but his eyes glaze over. "Today we assess the likely impact before we authorize a cut," he says. "If our people tell us stream sedimentation is going to be unacceptable, that's it."

Next we fly low over an area checkered with smaller patches; they're studded with seed trees and greening up. "Nowadays we limit clear-cuts to a maximum of 40 acres," King explains, "and they have to regenerate naturally or be planted within five years."

We detect the glimmer of a turquoise ribbon threading its way between the hills. "Water! H_2O!" King is having fun again. "We're rafting down the Selway,



On Selway River (right), rafts near the Moose Creek ranger station are being loaded by party breaking camp. More than 2,000 people annually apply for permits to float the Selway; only 78 private parties are allowed.

OK?" he says, making a rowing motion. "It's hot and you're thirsty. You get out your tin cup, lean over the side and dip yourself a nice cool one right out of the river." He "drinks" and mops his mustache on his sleeve. "*That's* how we measure environmental quality in the Nez!"

H_2O is the Nez's most vital resource. The forest drains a huge chunk of the western front of the Rockies. Historically, its rivers and streams have been highway and home to significant populations of salmon and steelhead—anadromous fish that are born inland, swim out to sea and return years later to spawn. The Nez has the capacity to produce more than 10 percent of all the steelhead and chinook in the entire Columbia River Basin.

That capacity is under severe stress, however. Mining and logging have left too many streams and rivers unsuitable for fish. Hydroelectric dams farther downstream are a major hindrance to migration. Chinook runs have deteriorated to the point where this year the species was listed as threatened with extinction.

The Nez has committed itself to turning this situation around. During the past ten years, it has spent $3 million on habitat improvement projects for streams and rivers deemed crucial for spawning. But the best way to deal with the effects of sloppy logging is to eliminate it, which is why the Nez has embraced low-impact equipment and techniques.

To get a look at the so-called new forestry in action, I hitch a ride one morning with several specialists from the Nez's Clearwater Ranger District. They're going to inspect an up-country timber sale consisting of 1,400 acres or so that drain into Peasley Creek. State law would permit a clear-cut here but, since the waters below Peasley contain both steelhead and native trout, the Nez rules it out. (Clear-cutting currently accounts for about half of the 3,400 or so acres harvested on the Nez in a typical year—far less than a couple of decades ago but far more than is expected a decade from now.) After a silviculturist surveyed the area, a planning team developed a detailed prescription for what to take, what to leave and what to do after the harvest to ensure regeneration.

"It's called the 'sustainable-ecosystem approach,'" Pat Green tells me on the drive up. She's a soil scientist. "It ties in with other buzz words like 'biodiversity' and 'endangered species.' Basically what you do is try to figure out how the plant and animal communities work, and how they're affected by wildfires and other natural disturbances. Then you tailor your logging to achieve the same beneficial effects—a healthier mosaic of vegetation, improved wildlife habitat, better riparian conditions."

We rendezvous with a three-man marking crew at a hunters' camp. One of the men, a young Nez Perce Indian named Brad Dreadfulwater, has been studying the prescription. Now he and his colleagues start walking through the woods, shaking their paint cans and sizing up the trees as they go. Every so often, one or the other stops to spray a tree trunk. The trees thus designated with blue marks are to be saved for seed, shelter, stream improvement, animal denning or whatever.

When Tom Kovalicky (above, with Coho) ran Nez, he stressed conservation, resisted political interference.

Moose Creek ranger station's packtrain carries supplies across suspension bridge constructed by hand.

According to the prescription, loggers will take about 40 trees per acre. An average of 15 per acre will be retained, including all ponderosa pine and western larch, and a certain number of Douglas fir and grand fir. Everything growing inside a 50-foot protection zone along each side of the tiny headwater stream here is to be spared. The long-term objective is to restore the kind of ponderosa-and-larch forest that once dominated this part of the country.

Brad gazes up appreciatively at an enormous grand fir and sprays it, even though it is well out of the protection zone. "It gives the stream good shade," he explains. He marks another big fir nearby because it is leaning toward the stream. "Someday it will fall in."

Phil Jahn, a resource staff officer, elaborates. "We used to harvest leaners *because* they would fall into the creek. Now we leave them because we've learned that stream banks need the stability they provide."

When I walk over to take a look at the alleged stream, I am astonished to discover that it's dry. This elaborate fuss is being made over an empty streambed that conveys water mainly in the springtime.

I tell Phil that he and his colleagues are behaving like a bunch of tree huggers. He takes the remark seriously. "You know, I joined the Forest Service 21 years ago because I wanted to do some good. I had no idea how commodity-oriented the outfit was. But it's different here. I've never seen this interdisciplinary approach work as well anywhere else."

During the drive back down the mountain, there is much joking and teasing. Tim Belton, the team leader, tells about the time he was bitten by a ladybug. Phil has a question. "Tim, did it ever occur to you that you look like a ladybug?"

When I bring up Jeff DeBonis, the conversation gets serious. DeBonis worked in the Nez for several years before transferring out to Oregon in 1988. There he started an organization called the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. The group accuses the top management of the Forest Service of suppressing dissent, ignoring scientific expertise and caving in to political and commercial pressures. Management's defenders portray DeBonis as a wild man. Not so, one of my companions says. "He isn't just defining an extreme. He's reflecting opinions that are widespread within the Forest Service."

Technician in water uses electroshocker to stun fish for a population study in lower part of Slate Creek.

Among those who would not disassociate themselves from many of DeBonis' views is his former boss at the Nez, Tom Kovalicky. After Kovalicky became supervisor in 1980, he infuriated cattlemen by "dumping" some cows, angered loggers by announcing that "timber is not king on the Nez" and mortified inquiring Congressmen by advising them to mind their own business. "Yeah, I was a warlord," he recalls with a chuckle.

A gregarious good old boy, Kovalicky grew up in Clifton, New Jersey, where he played football and dreamed of being a forest ranger. At the University of Montana, he studied forestry and served as a negative role model for future colleagues like Dave Poncin, whom he taught how to carouse. (Poncin is now one of the top administrators at the Nez.) Kovalicky's first job was at the Bridger National Forest in Wyoming, where he had what he calls "a traumatic experience" when he read *Silent Spring*. Rachel Carson's exposé of pesticide misuse fingered the Bridger as one of the culprits. "I resolved then and there that I would never sell out."

Kovalicky committed any number of heresies at the Nez. He challenged the Forest Service's traditional method of assigning timber quotas. He made wildlife management, and fisheries in particular, a top priority. He went back to Pinchot's bottom-up philosophy, telling his specialists he wanted their best scientific judgment and never mind the politics. "If we must err," he said, "let us err on the side of conservation." Because he knew he would need all the help he could get, he also set out to cultivate friends for the Nez wherever he could find them. He romanced conservationists, civic leaders, the Nez Perce Tribal Council, loggers, cattlemen, outfitters, fishermen.

As he and his staff went about developing a provocative new forest plan, Kovalicky kept the public involved every step of the way. He was a master promoter, generating reams of publicity as the forest supervisor who championed fish over trees. In his speeches around the state, he delighted in brashly introducing himself as the supervisor of the Nez Perce Anadromous Forest.

The politicking paid off. Whenever he needed support on an issue, or when some Senator or businessman was holding his feet to the fire, Kovalicky's friends turned out to back him up. In the meantime, the Nez's "ologists" were hard at work finding out the things

Riggins mayor "Ace" Barton (left) and ranger Bob Abbott float down a placid stretch of the Salmon River near Spring Bar (background) in a handsome dory.

they needed to know to put the forest on a sounder scientific footing.

By the time Kovalicky retired last year, many of the reforms initiated during his tenure had become programs that were not going to go away just because he did. Even so, conservationists and the Nez staff (more than 200 full-timers plus 300 part-time and seasonal employees) were apprehensive. They did not know much about Mike King and could not predict whether he would assay a reprise of his predecessor's Flying Wallenda act or hunker down and sound the retreat.

At about that same time, the Forest Service was in turmoil over another personnel change—the recent removal of the Northern Rockies' regional forester by the Washington office. The reason, the deposed administrator testified during an emotional Congressional hearing, was the failure of forests in his region to fulfill their timber quotas. In fact, Kovalicky and a number of other Western supervisors had been warning for years that they could no longer make the cuts. Last summer they went public with their gripes about Washington's timber-oriented priorities. Major stories appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and elsewhere.

King's reaction to all of that was reassuring. In private conversations and a memorandum to employees, he pushed the right buttons: "I applaud your strong land stewardship ethic. . . . We must continue this course, it's the right thing to do. Our actions reflect ecological principles, sustainability, and harmony between people and the land."

During his first year on the job, he was as good as his word. He continued to insist that logging decisions be based not on quotas but on scientific information. He continued to reach out for understanding and support.

But it wasn't all sweetness and light. Loggers and sawmill operators were unhappy with the go-slow approach. "It's a lot of protectionist nonsense," a consultant with a sawmill in Elk City told me. Some conservationists were stewing, too; the Nez was still spending more on timber and roads than on anything else. Earth First! showed up in Grangeville last spring to protest plans to log a roadless area. Even some of the Nez's own people were skeptical about the new priorities. I ran into a road-crew worker at the Burnt Knob fire lookout who groused, "Kovalicky and King care more about fish than people."

Nevertheless, this past June the Washington office unveiled a new system-wide "ecosystem management" policy. Among other things, it de-emphasizes clear-cutting and stresses the kinds of alternatives that have become standard procedure at the Nez.

It would be hard to find two more disparate examples of the changes that have taken place there than the little town of Riggins (pop. 470) and the enormous Moose Creek Ranger District (560,000 acres). A decade ago, Riggins was a grimy mill town. Today, transformed, it bills itself as "the float capital of the USA." At the opposite end of the spectrum, rangers at Moose Creek in the heart of the great Selway-Bitterroot wilderness have adopted what they call the "minimum-tool concept." No electricity or modern equipment for them. Instead they rely on pack animals, ingenuity and traditional tools to build bridges and clear trails.

The turnabout in Riggins began a decade ago when its only mill burned down. Switching to a recreational economy wasn't all that much of a leap, since the town is situated at an intersection of the Salmon River and a

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major highway, but it was a fortuitous one. To get a motel room on the weekend of the big jet-boat rally in April, you have to make a reservation a year earlier. More than 15,000 people show up. Even on an ordinary summer day as many as 2,000 intrepid souls can be seen bobbing down the Salmon on some 500 rafts.

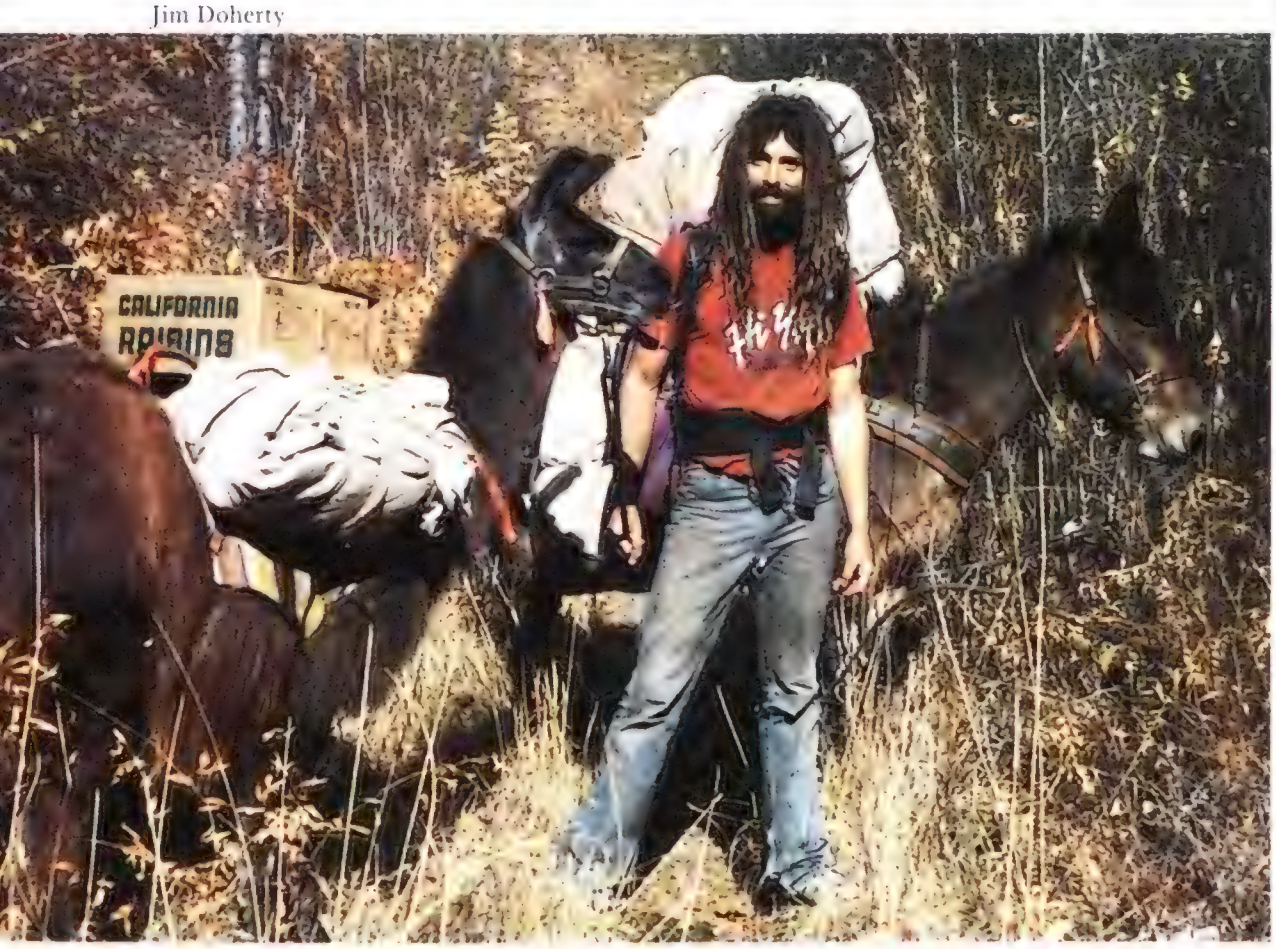
Former mill employees now operate restaurants or motels, run float-trip concessions or hire on as boatmen and guides. The town has changed physically as well as vocationally. It still has a rough look, but the buildings have been fixed up with false fronts to project a "Western" personality.

The mayor of Riggins, Ralph Asa (Ace) Barton, does not require any fixing up to project a Western personality. Raised on his parents' ranch in nearby Hells Canyon, he is the genuine article, from his droopy jowls and gravelly drawl to his cowboy boots and bowlegged walk. A retired Forest Service firefighter, he is a font of stories about the days when there was a still (pronounced STEEL) in every gulch. "Those old corn squeezins'," he says, "they was powerful enough to knock your hat in a crick."

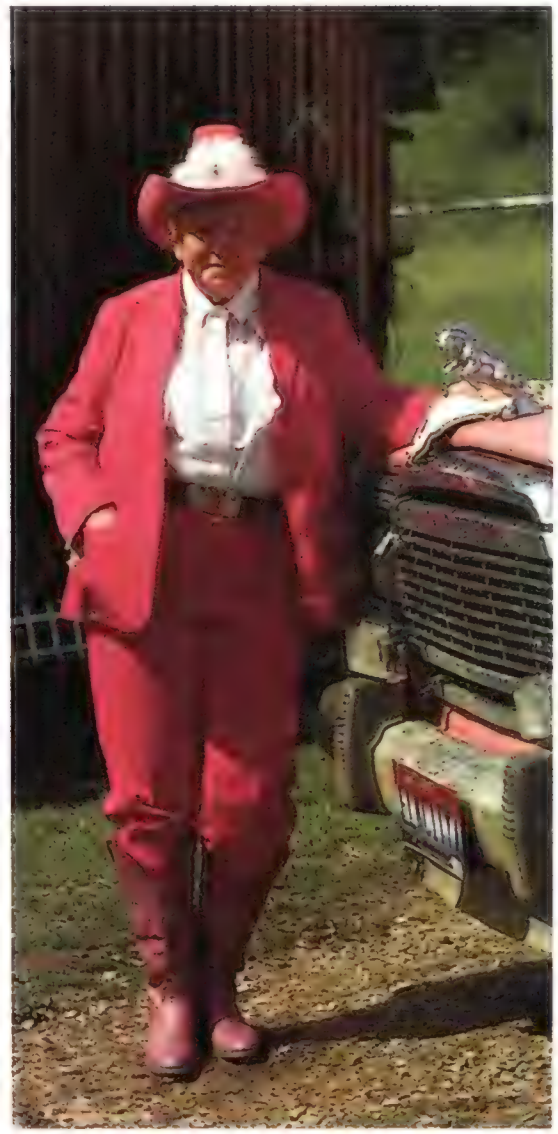
Ace has been a prime mover in the metamorphosis of Riggins. Bob Abbott, the man in charge of the sprawling Salmon River Ranger District, has been one of his principal coconspirators. Abbott, a large, genial fellow, has plenty to do just tending to business as usual. But he and his staff of 40 are confronted these days by concerns not traditionally included under the heading of business as usual. Among these are law enforcement, issuing permits to jet-boaters and rafters, and disposing of human waste left at river camping sites. "People who complain about deficit timber sales," Abbott says, "don't realize that the costs of recreation are sky-high too."

If the magic word in Riggins is "change," at Moose Creek it's "equilibrium." The challenge here is to preserve the wildness while accommodating a variety of human activities. It is illegal to log and build roads in the Selway-Bitterroot. It is not illegal to land a private plane on the grassy airstrip at ranger headquarters, and 900 pilots do just that each year. Hunting is legal, and more than 20 outfitters are allowed to maintain camps and transfer stations for pack animals in the wilderness. Backpacking and camping are permitted; a dozen or so parties stop by the ranger station each day in the summer. Dennis Dailey, the district ranger, issues around 80 permits each summer for float trips down the Selway. The number of people fooling around at any given point in time is low, but the impact can be high.

Jim Doherty



Don Heath leads llama (left) and mule loaded with provisions to wilderness ranch, where he lives alone.



Gertrude Maxwell, onetime schoolmarm and guide in the Elk City area, displays her penchant for pink.

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Leslie Hindman

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Chicago, Illinois. "Toddlin' town? Up and running's more like it."

AGE:
37

PROFESSION:
Founder and president, Leslie Hindman Auctioneers and Salvage One (a source of architectural artifacts).

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"You can't just draw a line around a pristine wilderness and leave it alone," Dailey emphasizes. "You have to manage it, just as you do any other ecosystem."

Given Moose Creek's size and remoteness, Dailey and his people have their work cut out. The minimum-tool concept does not make it easier. Scratch all but essential administrative plane and helicopter flights into base camp and reinstitute the old pack string. Mothball the tractor and substitute a mule-drawn mower for use on the airstrip. Buck firewood with a saw, heat shower water on the stove, wash clothes by hand. Learn how to use and take care of old-fashioned implements like the double-bit ax, the Pulaski and manual drilling equipment. If you're a smokejumper and you have the misfortune to be dropped on a blaze in the Moose Creek district, don't forget your compass. You're going to need it when you pack your way out. Say what? You have to rebuild a 100-foot-long suspension bridge over the Selway? Sorry. Do it by hand.

Strong coffee and stronger talk

One word for this is "masochism." It's just about the only word Dailey, King and several others are *not* using as we sit around the table here in this bright, roomy kitchen at the historic Moose Creek ranger station. We are drinking strong coffee and considering the minimum-tool concept. Apparently it all has to do with the need to acknowledge the primeval character of the Selway-Bitterroot as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. They are using words and phrases like: "Levels of use . . . standards of solitude . . . consult, consensus, monitor and evaluate . . . the integrity of the river."

They do go on. If there is one thing these Forest Service folks seem to love more than being in the wilderness, it's discussing it. They are so serious, so earnest, so . . . devout. Surely these individuals can't be the "forest killers" journalists and others have been carrying on about for years. It dawns on me as the discussion proceeds apace ("limits of acceptable change . . . the integrity of the ecosystem") that what we are dealing with here is not the management of a national forest. We are dealing with a religious experience. These people aren't rangers. For the moment, at least, they are apostles of wilderness, Jesuits of the woodland, evangelists of the biota. This isn't an interview. It's a prayer meeting!

"We can't just talk the talk," Dennis Dailey is avowing. "We have to *walk* the talk."

Mike King nods his head. Amen, brother.

"If we say to the public, 'You folks can't come in here with motorized vehicles, game carts, mountain bikes, chain saws, wheelbarrows or whatever,'" Dailey continues, "then the same goes for us."

"We have to set the example," King adds. "If we want the public to respect the wilderness, *we* have to respect the wilderness."

In the end, it comes down to this. The Salmon River lies behind us, a roaring creek is at our feet and an enormous wedge of red rock towers over our grassy campsite. The trail we followed up the canyon from the Salmon is full of deer tracks. There is a sour smell in the brush along the creek that reminds me of cat. For the better part of two weeks, my companion and I have been traveling and interviewing in the Nez. Always the mysterious, dark country lay just beyond reach. Now here we are, gathering firewood in the Gospel-Hump, alone in the wild at last.

Alone, that is, except for this guy. He appears without warning, leading a llama and a mule packed with bales of hay and wooden boxes full of nuts and raisins. He has long tangled hair and a long dark beard. He is wearing a purple T-shirt, tattered jeans and beat-up running shoes. He introduces himself as "Thumbs" Heath. Then we notice that each of his thumbs has an extra joint; his real name is Don. Behind all that hair, his features are quite fine and he has a warm smile. Having picked up the provisions that were dropped off for him at the river, Heath is on his way back to the private in-holding where he lives by himself and grows hybrids of amaranth. He believes amaranth, commonly considered a weed, has the potential to feed the world without the adverse environmental side effects of growing conventional grains. It becomes clear during our brief conversation that although he has turned his back on society, this young fellow is a true visionary who worries about important things.

He invites us to stop by his place for some sourdough pizza, and then he and his critters disappear. When we shake hands, I can feel his thumb working its way up toward my wrist.

We encountered plenty of rugged individualists during our pilgrimage through the Nez. In retrospect, Thumbs Heath seems as good a metaphor for the place as any of them. He is different, he is concerned about the environment, and he is trying to grow a crop that can be useful. His ascetic lifestyle reflects a more appropriate relationship of Man to nature than the conspicuous consumption that has for so long been a hallmark of our society and our national forests. Thumbs sees the big picture, yet has the patience for detail that science requires, which makes him the kind of person Aldo Leopold, who was for many years a distinguished professor of wildlife management at the University of Wisconsin, might have selected as a student.

Wildflowers and evergreens soften the rugged terrain near Hells Canyon, North America's deepest gorge.

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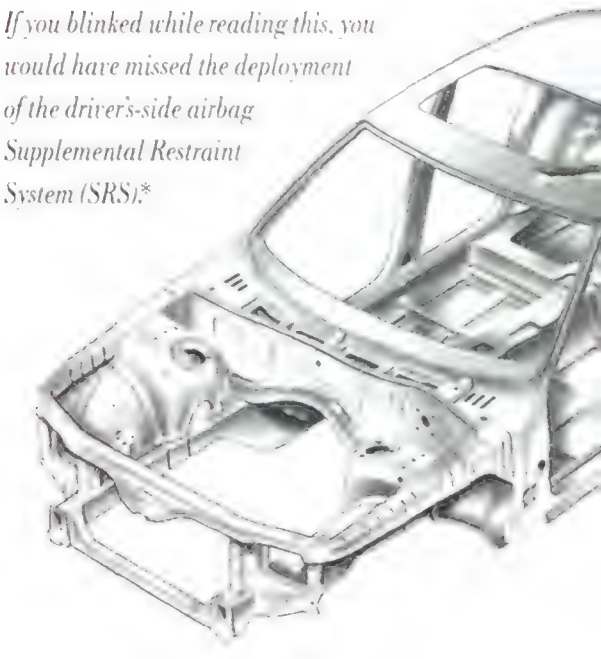

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Apart This Well?

nelled through what is known as the "crumple zone," which manages much of the impact in order to help protect the driver and passengers.

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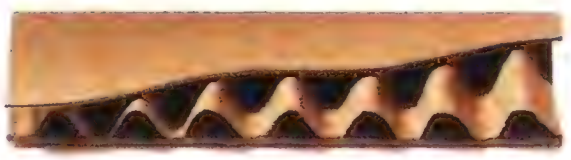

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By Bennett Schiff

The artist who was master of the double take

Magritte is called a Surrealist, but what he really did was show us the mystery that's there when our basic assumptions are challenged

Private collection, courtesy Galerie Isy Brachot, Brussels

Stroll along with René Magritte, the maker of improbable images, his wife, Georgette, and their beloved little dog, Loulou. They are in that solid bourgeois neighborhood of Brussels known for its restaurants and movie houses. It's about 1955. As usual, Magritte is wearing a good suit and a bowler, his favorite headgear.

Like a face in one of his paintings, Magritte's is expressionless. In fact, he looks as if he's just stepped out of one of his paintings. It is legitimate to imagine him stepping back in, a passenger in a revolving door set right into the canvas.

All is sober and ordinary, except that he and Georgette, as is their custom, are taking Loulou, the tiny, powderpuff Pomeranian, to the movies.

One of the things about Magritte, this gentle man with the stockbroker's face, is that he can always surprise you. He can make you ask questions, but don't expect answers. Magritte deals in images, in poetry and, ultimately, in mystery. If you must have answers, it is best that you make them up to suit yourself.

At heart Magritte was a detonator, a bombardier. "I detest my past," he wrote, "and anyone else's. I detest resignation, patience, professional heroism and obligatory beautiful feelings. I also detest the decorative arts, folklore, advertising, voices making announcements, aerodynamism, boy scouts, the smell of mothballs, events of the moment, and drunken people." His images were meant to upset the pattern, to undermine conventional expectations. To try to interpret his works as symbolic statements misses the point. You have it from the master himself:

"To equate my painting with symbolism, conscious or unconscious, is to ignore its true nature," he wrote. "People are quite willing to use objects without looking for any symbolic intention in them, but when they look at paintings, they can't find any use for them. So they hunt around for a meaning to get themselves out of the quandary, and because they don't understand what they are supposed to think when they confront the painting. . . . They want something to lean on, so they can be comfortable. They want something secure to hang on to, so they can save themselves from the void. People who look for symbolic meanings fail to grasp the inherent poetry and mystery of the image. . . . By asking 'what does this mean?' they express a wish that everything be understandable. But if one does not reject the mystery, one has quite a different response. One asks other things." At the expense of being slapped smartly on the wrist you are tempted to ask, what other things? There is, of course, no answer. The paintings *are* the answer.

"If the spectator finds that my paintings are a kind of defiance of 'common sense,'" wrote Magritte, "he realizes something obvious. I want nevertheless to add that for me the world is a defiance of common sense." Even in everyday life, very little got past him. He once told Suzi Gablik, author of a book about him, that he had been at the butcher's and had heard a woman ask for two nice kidneys. "When it was my turn," he said, "I was tempted to ask for two horrible kidneys."

Magritte considered that he had done his work well when nothing could explain it. For example, a locomotive, smoke pouring from its stack, charges into a room from the center of the fireplace (p. 50). Both toylike and ferocious at the same time, it hangs in midair, yet conveys speed, like a bullet frozen in its trajectory.

Is it a pipe or is it something else?

An ordinary, curved-stem pipe exists on a rectangular canvas. Underneath, painted in graceful script, is the legend: "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*"—"This is not a pipe." True, it isn't a pipe; it's a painting of a pipe, a representation of a pipe. That simple painting of 1929, entitled *The Treachery of Images*, has intrigued many viewers, including contemporary French philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Several years later Magritte painted a small picture of a piece of cheese and displayed it beneath an actual glass cheese bell, entitling it *This is a Piece of Cheese.*

A seated, headless figure has a straw hat where the head should be. Its chest cavity is open to reveal a cage containing two white doves. *The Healer* confronts the viewer.

A pair of ankle-high, lace-up boots end in naked, veined feet. The image is so compelling that a three-dimensional version of it caused a pedestrian jam when shown in a New York store window. It was once analyzed as a case of castration, to which Magritte commented to a friend, "Frankly, it is terrifying to see what one is exposed to in doing an innocent painting." Innocent?

An artist, stiff as a paper cutout, works at his easel. His model is an egg, and on the canvas he is painting a spread-winged bird (opposite).

What makes Magritte's paintings all the more remarkable is that the objects, which are precisely presented with superb technical facility, are readily identifiable. There are no abstractions and there is certainly nothing nonobjective. It is the shocking juxtaposition of the images that makes you see the commonplace in an entirely new way.

Any exhibition of Magritte's work is always the best show in town. The retrospective at the Metropolitan

In *Clairvoyance* (1936)—a self-portrait in which he paints a portrait of an egg, which takes form as a bird—Magritte explores affinities between objects.

Art Institute of Chicago

How best to represent a train? A speeding locomotive emerges from a fireplace in *Time Transfixed* (1938).

Harry Torczyner

The Tomb of the Wrestlers (1960) was result of a conversation with a friend about abstract painting.

Museum of Art in New York City, which runs from the 12th of this month until November 22, is a standout. Entitled "René Magritte," it is the first major roundup to be seen in this country since the 1965 survey at the Museum of Modern Art, two years before the artist's death. The 168 works at the Met, dating from the 1920s onward, include 128 paintings, as well as collages, gouaches, sculptures and painted bottles. "René Magritte" will be at the Menil Collection in Houston from December 15 through February 21, 1993, and then at the Art Institute of Chicago from March 16 through May 30.

This exhibition proves once again that, for Magritte, the medium was definitely not the message; he was more interested in thought and poetry than in painting. The very idea of being thought of as an artist was irritating to him. Magritte never had a studio; he painted in an ordinary room of his house and wore a business suit as he worked. "I always try to make sure," he said in 1967, in one of his last interviews, "that the actual painting isn't noticed, that it is as little visible as possible. I work rather like the sort of writer who tries to find the simplest tone, who eschews all stylistic effects, so that the only thing the reader is able to see in his work is the idea he was trying to express. So the act of painting is hidden." For him, painting was merely a means to an end; "I could easily have devoted myself to mathematics," he said.

Abstruse as Magritte's paintings are, his influence on the commercial world of advertising—which is nothing but message—has been monumental. It is easy enough to understand why. While his images are immediately recognizable, they are put together in so unprecedented a way that they are jackhammered directly into your head. And that is, after all, the dream of advertising.

Sarah Whitfield, who with David Sylvester curated the exhibition and who authored the accompanying catalog, counted up some accounts in advertising in which Magritte's images have been used and came up with: "books, records, insurance, credit cards, tele-

Challenged to produce an all-white composition, artist chose instead to show a red rose in a red room.

visions, typewriters, calculators, cars, cosmetics, wallpaper, chocolates and clothes, starting even before a major American television company [CBS] appropriated *Le faux miroir* as its logo." Advertising, in fact, was how Magritte, who wasn't financially successful as an artist until late in life, managed to pay his bills.

Not that there was ever much question about the course his life would take. Born in Lessines, Belgium, in 1898, René entered art school at the age of 12 in the town of Chatelet, to which the family had moved. He spent his vacations at the home of his grandmother at Soignies, where he had a strange and indelible experience that he later enjoyed recounting. He and a friend often played in a nearby cemetery, descending through iron trapdoors into the burial vaults. One day, coming up from a vault, he saw an artist painting in the cemetery, a sight that seemed magical to him. It was there, on encountering that artist in the cemetery, that he decided he wanted to be a painter.

Private collection, Brussels

Juxtaposing veiled woman, tuba and suitcase, *The Central Story* mocks viewers' wish to understand things.

Other events also had a particularly strong impact on the way Magritte would see the world. When René was 14, his mother was found drowned in a river near the family home; she had apparently thrown herself into the water from a bridge. Her body was found with her nightgown wrapped around her head, a terrifying image that Magritte used many times in nightmarish paintings. Then, two years after his mother's death, World War I erupted around him.

In 1916 Magritte entered Brussels' Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts, where he remained for two years. Over the next few years, he met the writers and poets, political radicals and esthetic avant-gardists who were to remain his close friends throughout his life.

The young Magritte looked at the world with a skeptical, ironical eye; he despised war, brutalism, totalitarianism. He was aware of—but not very sympathetic to—the Dadaists, who derided everything, and whose movement flamed, sputtered and died out just after the war. Keeping busy, he did a short tour of compulsory military service in 1920-21, and in 1922 married

National Gallery of Art

A recent advertisement (above) takes a page from Magritte, who painted *Carte blanche* (left) in 1963—a visual puzzle in which horse and rider are linked with trees. Madison Avenue has often borrowed from the artist.

Georgette Berger, whom he had met at a fairground nine years earlier, when she was 12. In the early '20s, he worked as a wallpaper designer, moved into advertising illustration, painted in the new styles of French modernism, showed in a local gallery and Antwerp and abroad in Geneva, and became involved in experimental journals and experimental theater. Soon he discovered the new creed of Surrealism, delivered by its poet apostle, André Breton, in the First Surrealist Manifesto in Paris in 1924.

To its theorists and practitioners, Surrealism, no matter how zany or comical it might look in its different aspects, was not to be taken lightly, for it was as much a poetic and literary practice as it was a visual one. Breton defined it as "pure psychic automatism, by which one intends to express verbally in writing or by any other method, the real functioning of the mind." There was to be no exercise of reason, or any other interruption by esthetics or morality, of the flow between the mind and the art. It would then be possible, he believed, to resolve "the states of dream and reality, in appearance so contradictory, in a sort of absolute reality, or surreality."

Magritte and his friends, writers Paul Nougé, Camille Goemans, Marcel Lecomte, Louis Scutenaire and Paul Colinet, formed the bedrock of Belgian Surrealism. Like the French Surrealists, they juxtaposed disparate images and ideas in an effort to find Breton's "surreality." The Belgians did not, however, accept psychic automatism. On the contrary, Magritte used esthetics and reason to present recognizable images completely removed from their normal context. The elements in his works make sense in their own right; it is their combination that forces the viewer to reexamine his or her notion of reality. "Reality," Magritte wrote, "is absolute, and unrelated to the various ways of 'interpreting' it. . . . Surrealism is the knowledge of absolute thought." The important thing was to bring thoughts into the open, to stun, shock and upset people, to irritate them out of their ruts. To make them see their everyday world in an entirely different way.

In 1927, he and Georgette set off for Paris. They lived there for three years, during which time Magritte achieved the height of his powers as a painter. A consistent man, he was never to change the basic ideas

Contributing Editor Bennett Schiff wrote most recently on George Bellows (June 1992).

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Private collection, New York

Woman-bottle (1940-41), painted during the Occupation in Belgium, was first of some two dozen in a series.

formulated there. And although he had many followers, some of whom achieved international stature, he never thought much of any of them.

Paris in the late '20's was alive with creative people—André Breton, Paul Eluard, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, Louis Aragon, Man Ray, Jean Arp and many others. There was the bray of the music halls, hot jazz clubs, the Charleston and Josephine Baker. And there were the movies, of which Magritte was a great and devoted fan. Later, in Brussels, he would make a series of amateur movies, complete with cast and script.

And, to round him out a bit, one should note that he read deeply in philosophy, poetry and world literature, and was a devoted and knowledgeable listener to and collector of music, both classical and popular. In all, an aware, alert, creative and cultivated modern man.

A rocky relationship with Breton

Several times Magritte fell out with Breton, who ruled Surrealism as if from Rome. On one occasion Magritte and Georgette, who was wearing a small gold cross on a chain around her neck, attended a dinner at Breton's home. Breton remarked that it was bad taste to wear religious emblems, and René and Georgette walked out.

Paris was good in every way for Magritte, except in sales. A large show he held there coincided with the stock market crash of 1929. That, the lack of ready cash and, as some have it, the disagreements with Breton precipitated the couple's return to Brussels.

They had had three good years in Paris. Magritte had been exposed to the pot in which Surrealism boiled, had met and exchanged views with its chief practitioners and theorists, had put a fine gloss on his technical ability and had decided it was time to go home to his friends in Brussels, where together they could practice their own brand of Surrealism—quieter, less politicized and, with any luck, even more subversive of propriety.

The Belgian Surrealists were a more sober lot than their Parisian counterparts, who set out to be seen, to be noticed, as they prodded society. More cerebral, quieter in their dress, the Belgians were closer to one another and less doctrinaire.

All of this suited Magritte, the quiet cannoneer, very well. A supreme ironist, the model of the paradoxical man, the possessor of one of the most bizarre imaginations of any artist of the 20th century, an era that has perhaps exploited the farthest ranges of human imagination more than any other, he deeply enjoyed sinking into the self-effacing anonymity of the middle class, the very target of his visual detonations.

For the remainder of his years Magritte lived the

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Galerie Isy Brachot, Brussels-Paris

The small painting *The Treachery of Images* (1935) was a later version of his 1929 work of the same name. It posed the question: Do you see a pipe or a reproduction?

quiet life he preferred. He did as he pleased, which was to stay put most of the time. Not fond of traveling, he liked being home, seeing his friends, reading, listening to music, painting. In the mornings, Loulou by his side, he would shop for groceries. The afternoons might be spent at a café with friends, playing chess, talking. Saturdays were reserved for gatherings of friends, at which titles for his paintings might come up.

Magritte was tenderly devoted to his wife; time and again he captured her beauty in his paintings, even though the scenes themselves were often, to put it mildly, strange. Harry Torczyner, an American international lawyer who was a friend of Magritte's and collected his work, wrote of the time, in 1964, when the two men were strolling in Nice. They passed a shop window in which Magritte noticed a porcelain rooster. " 'I must buy that for Georgette,' he said to me. 'She'll love it.' 'Are you still courting her, René?' 'It's true,' he replied, smiling."

Even his house, a comfortable one he could afford to buy with increasing sales in the mid- and late '50s, looked like the houses in his paintings. The furnishings were ordinary, with very few trappings of an artist to be seen. Though he could have afforded a studio by then, he never had one. Previously, when he and Georgette had lived in flats, he had painted in the kitchen or the dining room. In the house, he worked in a boudoir adjoining the couple's bedroom. The set-up was bare: easel, tubes of paints, charcoal for sketching—the basics.

He painted, at the beginning of his major canonical phase, pictures of objects in the most disparate of situations, things that had nothing to do with one another or with the context in which they were placed. Then he moved on to uniting objects that had an underlying affinity—an egg in a cage, for example. The bird, which is not shown, is the bond between them. He called this the doctrine of "elective affinities." In the case of the egg in the cage, there is also a more subtle affinity: both egg and cage are images of confinement. Magritte also took up such concepts as unimaginable changes in scale (an apple occupying an entire room), gravity (huge boulders stationary in the sky), metamorphosis (figures growing into something else or made of something else) and the question of what lies beyond what one sees (a painting superimposed on a landscape that reproduces the identical landscape).

It took some 25 years before Magritte's work caught on internationally; at first, as so often with modern European painters, in the United States, and soon after in England, France and Italy. Now he is one of the major figures of 20th-century painting. "To the extent that my pictures have any value," he once said, lobbing a grenade at the experts and explainers, "they do not lend themselves to analysis." He quoted Victor Hugo, "We never see but one side of things." And to this he added, "it's precisely this 'other side' that I'm trying to express."

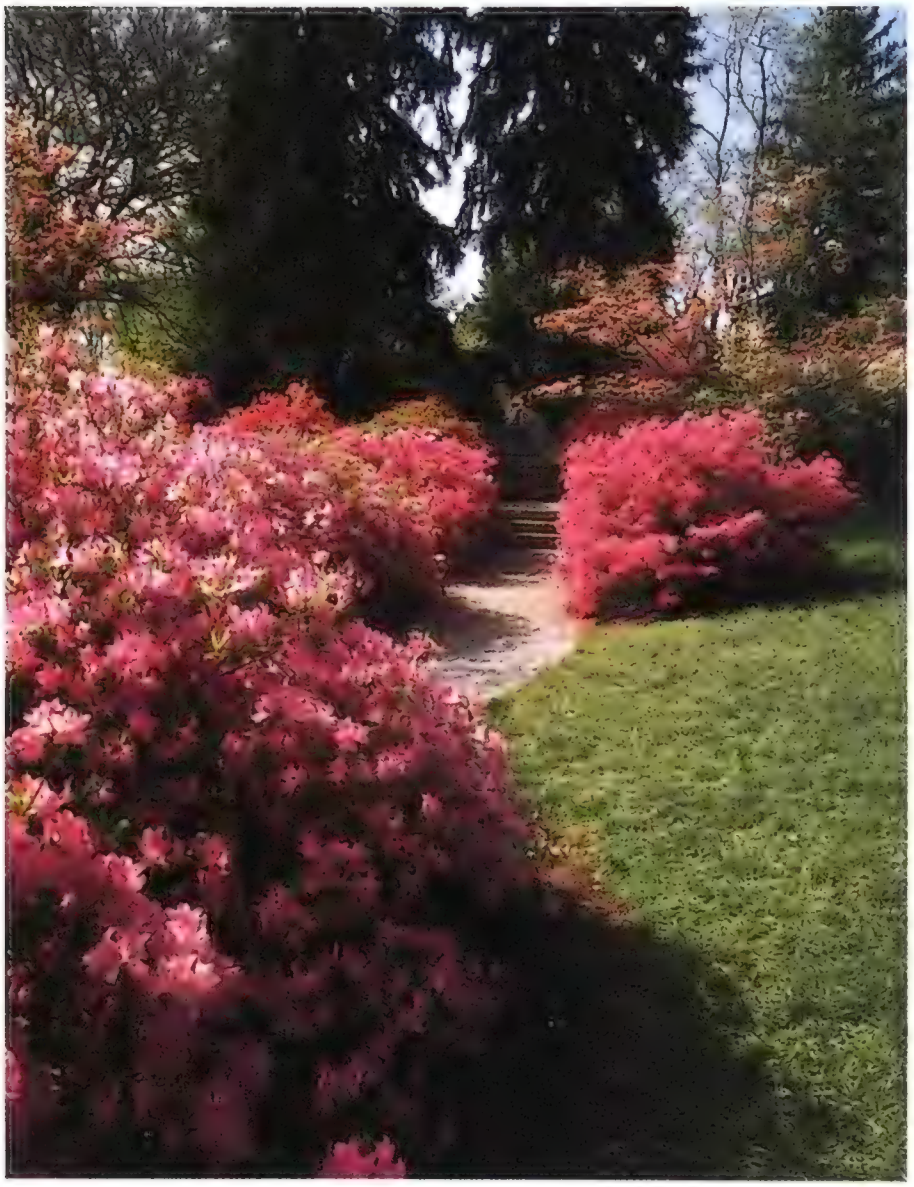
Enigmatic painting *The Son of Man* suggests that one's point of view is always somewhat obscured.

Private collection

By Robert Wernick

Here's the house that lots and lots of jack built

A turn-of-the-century pleasure dome for Vanderbilts, Biltmore now flourishes by giving tourists a great day for their money



A 15-acre azalea garden is one of five gardens on lush 8,000-acre estate designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

The narrow road twists up a ravine past a clattering mountain brook and quiet pools. Blazing clumps of azalea and dogwood half-screen tall stands of oak and tulip poplar behind. Deer browse in the underbrush. Birds sing. Bees hum. No wonder Hollywood chose these woods as a setting for a new production of *The Last of the Mohicans.*

It is man-made, of course. Thousands of trees and bushes were put here in the 1890s by Frederick Law Olmsted (SMITHSONIAN, December 1972), the designer of New York's Central Park, to create "an aspect more nearly of sub-tropical luxuriance than would occur *spontaneously*" in the southern Appalachians. Turn-of-the-century visitors were supposed to be awed and delighted. And then, at a curve in the long road, the "wilderness" gave way to a complex of formal gardens, and in the center there stood, as it does today, an enormous chateau with high-pitched slate roofs and innumerable turrets, dominating the North Carolina countryside as far as Mount Pisgah, 17 miles away.

The chateau, the gardens, the azaleas and the million and a half or so trees are here all because a young man came riding through this countryside one day in the late 1880s. It was very different then, a sorry stretch of overlogged, overgrazed, plowed-over hillsides and bottomlands, its soil cruelly eroded, its few stunted trees good for nothing but firewood. But George Washington Vanderbilt, vacationing in Asheville with his mother, saw a chance to turn it into a bustling country estate like those he had so admired in Europe.

A time when $10 million did very nicely

He was still a bachelor, but the house would be big enough to bring up any family-to-be in a setting of aristocratic comfort. He could raise cattle and crops, ride and hunt and fish, and all his friends could come for repose and entertainment. He would call the place Biltmore, from "Bildt," the name of the little Dutch farming village from which his ancestors had emigrated to Staten Island, and "more," an Old English word for "rolling uplands."

Being a Vanderbilt, George had little financial difficulty taking the step from vision to reality. He was the youngest of the nine children of William Henry Vanderbilt, head of the clan since the death of grandfather Cornelius—nicknamed "the Commodore" for the great 19th-century fortune he built on steamships, railroads and sharp practice. George's share in the family fortune was comparatively small, estimated to be $10 million, but in a time when a typical city household made $573 a year and flour cost 3 cents a pound, $10 million did very nicely.

In the 1880s the Vanderbilts were still regarded as new money, pushy upstarts compared with people like

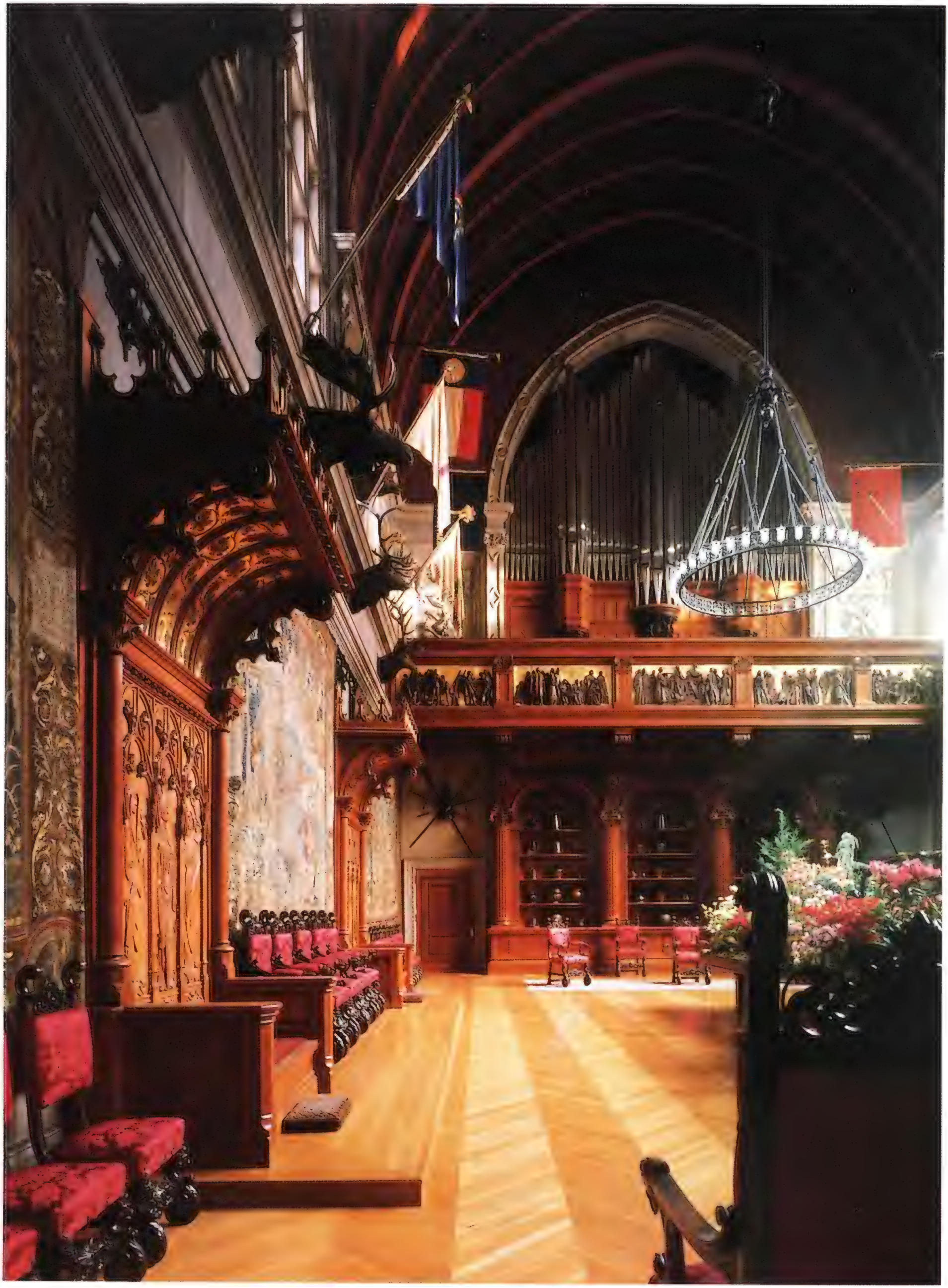
Splendid facade of the 255-room house, designed by Richard Morris Hunt to suggest a French chateau, is reached through a leafy approach road that hides it from the visitor's eye until the last minute.

the Astors, who had made their fur-trading fortunes somewhat earlier. The Vanderbilt rage for monumentality was considered a sign of their vulgar nature. They all had a weakness for bigger and better, beginning with the Commodore himself, who built a large house on Staten Island. After barely settling in, however, he decided that it would be better for his business and social aspirations to live in Manhattan. When his wife, Sophia, balked at moving, he had her clapped into an insane asylum till she came to her senses.

Vanderbilt descendants built for posterity. George's father helped do the Metropolitan Opera House, and William K., George's brother, did Grand Central Station. George's niece Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney would found the first museum of contemporary American art. But mostly they built for themselves, erecting chateaus on Fifth Avenue or the Hudson River or in Newport, where they could show off all the glittering luxuries that went with new money in the 19th century.

George had enjoyed grand houses before he came to Asheville. He grew up in his parents' Fifth Avenue mansion. He inherited and remodeled a summer house in fashionable Bar Harbor, Maine. But he had the urge for something grander and more his own. He did

Color photographs by Robert C. Lautman



Biltmore's creator, George Vanderbilt (far right), hammed it up with friends after a ride, circa 1910. Seated (center) is Ur-forester Gifford Pinchot.

Stylishly swathed, Mrs. George Vanderbilt, née Edith Stuyvesant Dresser, had her portrait painted shortly after her marriage in Paris in 1898.

not want to be cooped up in a corner of a city block, or in the 11 acres in Newport where his brother Cornelius was building a 70-room house, the Breakers. So that the name "Vanderbilt" would not send prices skyrocketing, he set agents to work buying up land in North Carolina, and by 1890, when he was 28 years old, he was well on his way to acquiring 125,000 acres of it. Then he set about designing a house.

A natural choice for architect was his friend Richard Morris Hunt, who had already left his mark on the American landscape with the base for the Statue of Liberty and the Tribune Building in New York. Hunt was a grand master in the style of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which dominated the Western world in the days before World War I. The puritanical early 20th century would dub this style "Eclecticism," and for many decades no one with any pretension to taste dared to say a good word for it. Now that Eclecticism has been rechristened Post-Modernism, however, it has become intellectually respectable to cast a fond eye on these ornate, theatrical structures and to sympathize with George Vanderbilt's admiration for the ebullient confidence that launched Hunt on the design of Biltmore.

Banquet Hall seats 64 for dinner, has a 70-foot-high ceiling. But the organ pipes are not linked to an organ.

His original sketch for the house was a modest Tuscan villa. However, in the course of long discussions and correspondence with his patron, ambition took wing, the design became more grandiose. The house would contain 255 rooms and become, in fact, the largest residence ever built by a private citizen in America (perhaps in the whole world, for that matter).

The style of the exterior was tried and true French Renaissance, combining the classical sobriety of Italy with the decorative exuberance of old-fashioned French Gothic. The outside of Biltmore is made up of variations on a number of chateaus, all the jewels of the Loire Valley—Blois, Chambord and Chenonceaux. Inside was a rich jumble from a variety of periods and from throughout Europe and Asia. The taste of the day saw nothing odd in mingling 16th-century tapestry with modern painting, putting a room full of Louis XV furniture next to one chock-full of Chippendale. Hunt designed some of the furniture himself.

In the vast hall called the Gallery, George Vanderbilt, a young man with brooding eyes and long, hyperesthetic face, stares out at us from a portrait by John Singer Sargent. He was a sport among Vanderbilts, an intellectual who read seriously in eight languages. He

had studied land management and the history of art, and visited the art treasures of Europe not just to collect them but to learn from them. He commissioned Sargent portraits of Hunt and Olmsted for his walls, portraits that were considerably bigger than his own. But he was very much a part of the designing process at Biltmore. He was, said Olmsted, "a delicate, refined and bookish man with considerable humor and shrewd, sharp, exacting, and resolute in matters of business."

When Hunt proposed gracefully curved legs for chairs he was designing for the 70-foot-high Banquet Hall, Vanderbilt insisted on "more manly," straight legs. He wanted this hall to look like the nave of a church, and Hunt designed some giant organ pipes for one wall. They were attached to no organ, but the effect was grand. When it was proposed that local pine might be good enough for the floors in the servants' quarters upstairs, young Vanderbilt scrawled a vigorous "No" in the margin. Everything in Biltmore was to be first class, and all its wooden floors oak.

Complete with a vast wrought-iron chandelier that hung down through three stories of the central stairwell, and 30-odd master switches that controlled the flow of electricity, the place was more like an ocean liner than a house. It was rumored locally that if all the electricity at Biltmore went on at once, the trolley cars at Asheville would grind to a halt. The mansion was a storehouse of modern conveniences. Unlike Blois and Chenonceaux, it was built as much for comfort as for show. The great chandelier held hundreds of bulbs, recently invented by Mr. Edison. The guests could rise to their bedrooms in elevators made safe by Mr. Otis (SMITHSONIAN, November 1989). There were telephones, there was electric refrigeration, there was central heating, there was an electric signal system for summoning any of the 80-odd servants when they were wanted.

Construction took nearly six years. A spur railway three miles long was built to bring in tons of Indiana limestone for the walls. A brick factory and a woodworking factory went up on the grounds. Hundreds of men were kept busy digging, hammering, welding, planting. Everything was ready on schedule for the grand opening on Christmas Eve, 1895.

An elevated host of Vanderbilts and Vanderbilt in-laws were present, along with some personal friends, and they were all enchanted. The trees that Olmsted had planted were now up to 12 feet high and spread a carpet of green on both banks of the French Broad River all the way to Mount Pisgah. The English Walled Garden, the Italian Garden and a man-made lake called the Lagoon were all laid out. The Bass Pond was well stocked. The nursery was full of a fantastic range of domestic and exotic growths. A dairy herd and horses were comfortably ensconced in the new barn and stables, which were also designed by Hunt.

Everything in the house was in place, where it all can be seen to this day: the Flemish tapestries and the Chippendales, the statues of Saint Louis and Joan of Arc looking out over North Carolina, the frieze of scenes from *Tannhäuser* in the Banquet Hall, the great heads of moose and grizzly that Vanderbilt had bought rather than shot, the tables in the Billiard Room, the bowling alley, the indoor swimming pool, the gymnasium with its weights and rowing machines.

Two Renoirs in the Chippendale Room

Guests could inscribe witticisms in a Biltmore Nonsense Book provided for them (there are pages of variations on the theme "This is the House that Vanderbilt"). Serious-minded guests could slip down a spiral staircase into the 10,000-volume library, with an 18th-century Venetian painting on the ceiling, to find a book they could take to read in bed. At the top of the stairs is a well-thumbed copy of *How The Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis' exposé of conditions in big-city slums.

"It is delightful down here," wrote George's niece Gertrude of that first Christmas. "We have walked and ridden and when we were at home sat about together and fooled and I have seldom enjoyed anything so much."

And so Biltmore was launched. For years George Vanderbilt kept coming back, sometimes only for Christmas, sometimes for many months. Little treasures were added to the first ones, like the two Renoirs in the Chippendale Room. The oval-shaped Louis XV bedroom, designed for a still-hypothetical Mrs. Vanderbilt,

Robert Wernick has written on some 50 subjects for SMITHSONIAN. *Among them: Richard III, Goya, Talleyrand, failed summit meetings, one-eyed jacks.*

Mrs. Vanderbilt's dressing-room closet is full of period reproductions of shawls, gloves and hatboxes. Swags and satinwood in guest room (right) derive from the style of English furniture designer Thomas Sheraton.

Breakfast Room has family Spode and Minton china, jasperware fireplace tiles made by Josiah Wedgwood. Vast library (right) holds 10,000 volumes, less than half the number owned by bookish George Vanderbilt.

Brass panel with call buttons and speaking tube linked kitchen to a pantry and the servants' dining room.

The Biltmore Butler's Pantry is two stories high and still holds 64 place settings of china and crystal.

found an occupant when George married Edith Stuyvesant Dresser in Paris in 1898.

Great achievements always provoke envy. In December 1897 a newspaper reported that Vanderbilt, ordering a servant to bring in a glass of the springwater that he had piped in at tremendous cost, was horrified to hear that the pipes had burst and he could not get a drop. "Then," said the story, "George Vanderbilt stopped. The sunken foundations, the cracked marbles, the idle sawmill, the unproductive dairy farm, and all the failures that had been pointed out came rushing in on him. He could have stood all these, but he could not stand this climax. He had spent $10,000,000 on Biltmore, and he could not get a drink of water!

"Can we wonder that he decided to go to India?"

Next day, the *New York Times* corrected the story—not a word of truth in it.

Biltmore's construction was rock solid, and the place was a going concern. Its founder had always regarded it not as a rich man's toy but as a vital part of the local economy. It not only provided employment for an astonishing proportion of the local population, but also was a profitable business enterprise. Olmsted's nursery sold seeds and saplings all over the United States. The herd of Jerseys produced the best milk in North Carolina. The woodlands, under the direction of Gifford Pinchot, a young socialite friend of George Vanderbilt's who founded the U.S. Forest Service, became a vast laboratory in the proper use and preservation of forest land. "Mr. Vanderbilt," lamented the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, "has more workers and a larger budget for his forestry projects than I have . . . for the whole Department of Agriculture." The principles of sustained yield, striking a balance between cutting timber and growing new trees, standard practice among foresters today, were first worked out in the United States at Biltmore.

Though some sophisticates like Edith Wharton thoroughly enjoyed their visits, others felt there was something missing, and they felt it with varying degrees of intensity. Henry James, who visited while he was suffering from gout, was appalled by the "vast sequestered remoteness . . . the showy colossal heartbreaking home and the desolation and discomfort of the whole thing." ("North Carolina" must have seemed to him another name for Patagonia.) Gifford Pinchot was a bit kinder: "As a feudal castle it would have been beyond criticism. But in the U.S. of the nineteenth century and among the one-room cabins of the Appalachian mountaineers, it did not belong. . . ."

For all its charms, Biltmore could never be the great house of George Vanderbilt's dreams. Over the cen-

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Biltmore could use both local electricity and electric power generated by a gasoline engine on the premises.

turies in the European houses he admired, the lord of the manor had not only provided employment for his tenants but settled their quarrels, oversaw their education and sometimes led them off to war. Biltmore did its best to fit in. The model village for estate workers with its Hunt-designed houses and Hunt-designed church, the school for carpentry and other traditional crafts, the Young Men's Institute for young blacks in Asheville were all worthy and much appreciated by the neighbors.

But Americans, as F. Scott Fitzgerald once observed, though they are occasionally willing enough to be serfs, are obstinate about being peasants. George Vanderbilt could never be a lord of the manor riding through crowds of faithful tenantry tugging at their forelocks. He did not belong in local society any more than his statues of Saint Louis and Joan of Arc belonged in North Carolina. Though he entertained handsomely, he did not entertain as much as he had intended, and the guests were mostly limited to other Vanderbilts and some literary and artistic friends like James and Wharton and Sargent. The doings in the house never acquired the richness of scandalous anecdote that marked some English dwellings, or would mark William Randolph Hearst's even more flamboyant San Simeon.

Vanderbilt must have been aware of the failure, for in his later years he took to spending more and more time in his house in Washington, D.C., where he had more friends. But when he died in 1914 at age 51, after an appendectomy, the great house went on in a desultory way as a family home for his widow. A lively lady who smoked and drove a car before most women of her class dared to, she sold some of the forest to the U.S. Government (it forms the nucleus of Pisgah National Forest), and in time the property shrank to its present, more manageable size of 8,000 acres. Olmsted's great nursery was swept away by a catastrophic flood in 1916, but the dairy farm flourished and more or less paid for the upkeep of the estate.

Cornelia, the Vanderbilts' only child, married John Cecil, an English diplomat descended from the great Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's Lord High Treasurer. The Cecil boys, George and William, slid down Biltmore's banisters, unaware that there was anything unusual about living in a 255-room house.

Through the Depression and war years the property was managed for the Vanderbilt heirs by a local dignitary, Judge Junius Adams. It was he who turned Biltmore into a corporation, opening the house to paying visitors for the first time in 1930. During World War II it served as a safe haven for treasures shipped down from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.,

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Vanderbilt grandson William Cecil, 63, now directs the place. It took him eight years to show a profit.

a city briefly fearful of a German air attack. The place was still more or less intact in 1960, when Judge Adams died. In time the Cecil boys decided to split Biltmore between them. George took over the booming dairy business; William got the house and grounds.

"People shook their heads at first," says William, a big, bluff, former naval person—he served in the Royal Navy in the 1940s—who is now known to everyone in Asheville as "Mr. C." (above). "No one could imagine what I was going to do with this colossal white elephant." At age 32 he was an officer of the Chase Bank in New York, but felt it was time to try to make a go of Biltmore. The blood of both the Vanderbilts and the Cecils, whose men had a keen eye for the main chance, ran in his veins. He was determined to show that, like the Commodore switching from steamships to railroads, he knew where the future was.

The future, as so many have discovered in 20th-century America, was in the marketing of dreams. And for a daily fee, he figured Biltmore, with all its grandeur and opulence, could be anyone's temporary dream of luxury and comfort. It was also a rich and colorful testimonial to a unique period in American life, the decades around the turn of the century when the income tax was nonexistent, there was plenty of cheap skilled labor, and a man could let his imagination run free when it came to building a house—the dream time for American millionaires. It was only natural that Biltmore should be declared a National Historic Landmark.

There are, of course, scores of such landmarks spread around the land, and many of their owners and managers sometimes look askance at Biltmore. "They say I am too commercial," says Cecil. "What they mean is that I pay my way." Actually, he does no more than anyone else in exploiting his landmark. He has a gift shop and a restaurant; he runs occasional events like flower festivals, horse-carriage parades, concerts. But basically, he does what everyone else does: he offers his slice of the past and tries to preserve it in a state approaching the original as much as possible.

Preserving it is the rub. Most historical monuments tend to develop a shabby look over the years. "There is only a fine line," says Cecil, "between preservation and dirt." Preservation is a terribly expensive business. When Cecil took over Biltmore, he had to have the brocades re-created by French weavers. When he repaired his entrance driveway, it cost $370,000. When he replaced the drainage pipe in the Bass Pond, it cost $422,000. Removing, restoring and replacing the 70-foot-long painting *The Chariot of Aurora* by Giovanni Pellegrini, an 18th-century Venetian, had all the complexity of a military campaign.

"That is why," says Cecil, "my competitors always have a begging bowl in their hand. They are always asking for grants, subsidies, bequests, gifts, tax breaks. And when they can't get enough of those, they end up in the hands of the government. That is the kiss of death."

Those who enjoy it pay for it

Running a house like Biltmore demands quick decisions. The sooner repairs are made, the cheaper they are. But government bureaucracies cannot move quickly; they wait till a place is about to fall down and then waste millions in crash programs. Why, asks Cecil, should the government be in the house-management business at all? Why, with all the problems of the U.S. budget deficit, and of the unemployed and the homeless buzzing about our ears, should we be asking the taxpayer to subsidize the upkeep of a place that shows how rich people lived a hundred years ago? It is more sensible, and more efficient in the long run, to ask the people who want to see such a place to pay for the cost of its maintenance.

The first thing, Cecil decided, was to make sure that customers would get their money's worth. Biltmore had to be restored to mint condition. Fortunately, no revolutionary mobs had ever swept through

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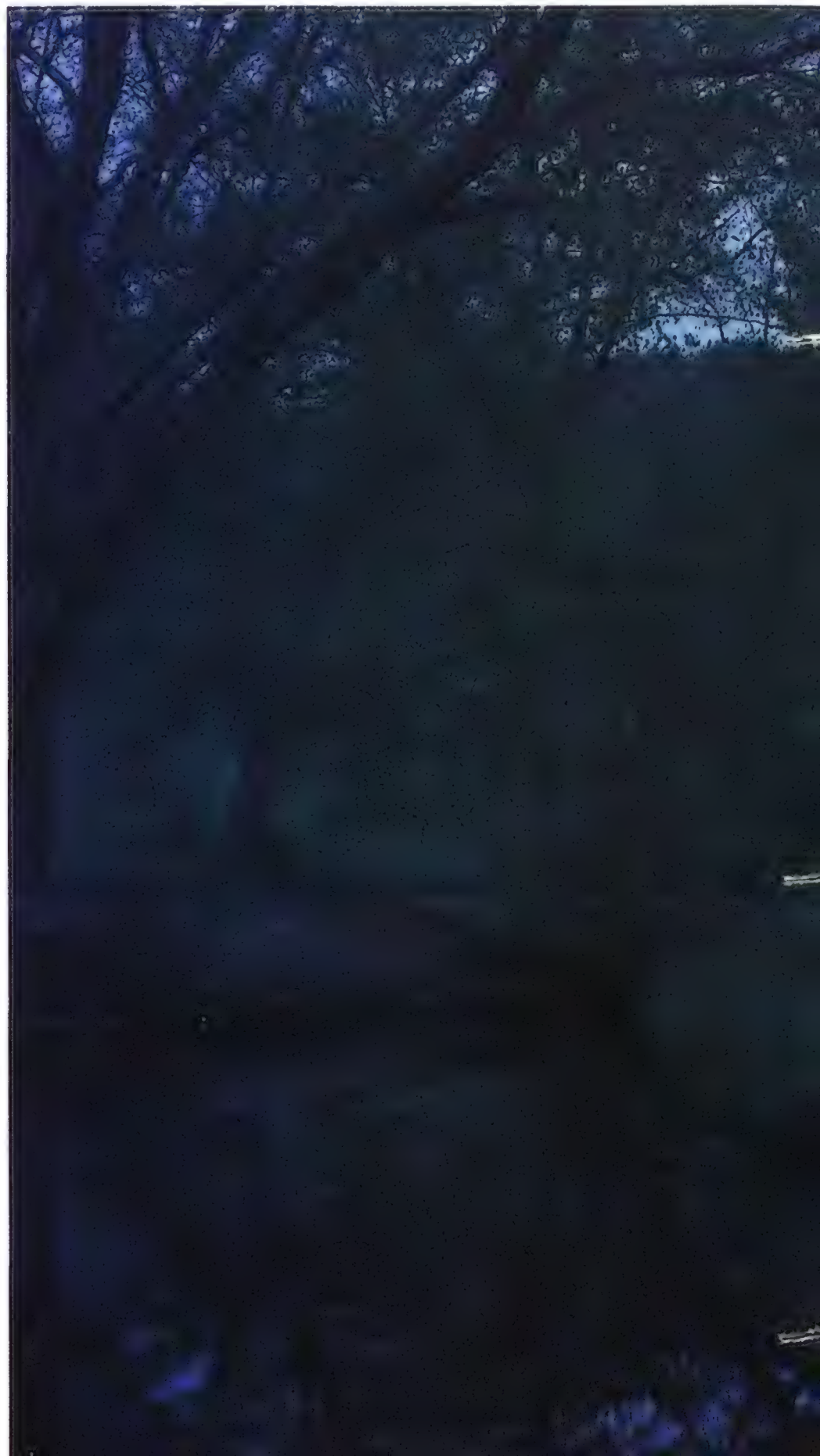
the grounds, nor had the tax collector carted off any of the treasures. All the old furniture and the old decorations were in place or tucked away in storage rooms. George Vanderbilt, who never threw anything away, left an archive of more than 50,000 documents that contain information on everything from the prices of all the 400 Oriental rugs to the domestic problems of the housekeeper who had a drunken husband. Armed with this data and a skilled staff, which has grown from 60 to 550 in 30 years, Cecil has been able to bring house and grounds up to the pitch of perfection George Vanderbilt demanded a century ago.

Biltmore could always count on loyal and devoted servants. There was Chauncey Beadle, who ran the grounds for 60 years and spent his vacations tramping through the eastern mountains of North America looking for new subspecies of azalea to bring back for planting at Asheville. Today there is a trio of tapestry-conservators who have a computerized color-formulating system for their dyes and are ready for any emergency. A few years ago a moose head worked loose from the wall in the Banquet Hall, and as it fell to the floor, its giant antlers ripped the splendid Flemish tapestry *Vulcan Forging and Spreading the Net.* For the past year and a half the conservators have been repairing the tapestry thread by thread.

If the restorations were done well enough, Cecil reasoned, people would pay to see the result. He has been proved spectacularly right. When he took command in 1960, about 63,000 visitors a year were paying $2.40 each for a brief tour of a few rooms and the gardens. It was slow going at first, but by 1968 he turned a profit of $16.34—the tide was flowing his way. Today it is a tidal wave. Last year, the self-guided tour, which now comprises 85 rooms and the landscaped grounds and takes at least several hours, attracted 718,000 visitors. They paid $19.95 apiece to get in (the current price is $21.95). Though it has an $8.5 million yearly payroll, Biltmore receives not a cent in subsidies, pays its property taxes like any other private house in North Carolina and is a model of entrepreneurial ingenuity—as well as a mainstay of the local economy.

There are visitors who grouse that $21.95 is just about the steepest price charged anywhere to visit somebody's house. Why, they say, they can visit a Vanderbilt mansion on the Hudson, with a Roosevelt house thrown in, for a few dollars. Yes, says Cecil, but it takes thousands of tax dollars to keep that price down. Here you get just what you pay for. And there is so much to pay for: Chauncey Beadle's azaleas, the Dürer prints, the Japanese swords, the chess set of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Boldini portrait of Edith Vanderbilt—a bravura rendering of a swirling shawl in which the lady's face seems only an afterthought—the old chests and modern bathtubs, the stables where you can lunch in Hunt-designed stalls exactly where the Vanderbilt horses once bedded down in luxury. In the dairy barn turned winery, you can sample Biltmore's own quality Chardonnay and "champagne." And, of course, there is the three-mile-long road through Olmsted's unnatural "natural forest." By the time they are through it all, most visitors have concluded that they got a bargain.

Biltmore fans claim the place is way more satisfying



Seen from the west at dusk, the great house glitters theatrically in the blue-green waters of its lagoon.

than, say, Disneyland. The only grand house they see there is Sleeping Beauty Castle, and even the most unsophisticated visitors know that Sleeping Beauty lived only in a fairytale. But everything at Biltmore is real. This was the house of flesh-and-blood Vanderbilts. People just like you and me—except that they could buy pretty much anything they pleased—sat in these carved chairs, chalked these billiard cues, watched wild boar turn on these spits. For many, the most rewarding part of a visit is not the great rooms filled with brocades and portraits, but an optional (for $10) *Upstairs, Downstairs* look at the machinery that made life here possible: the laundry rooms, the drying room, the ironing room, the sewing room where the sheets and curtains were mended, the kitchens with their giant ovens, the steam furnace for the central heating, the 105 water valves, the electric call-boxes for the servants, the parlor where the ladies' maids could knit and gossip while on call.

Visitors love it all. At most historic landmarks you are apt to see a sullen, dutiful look in the crowds: this is what the teacher ordered. At Biltmore the characteristic look is a picnicker's smile. For almost three-quarters of a million satisfied tourists every year, George Vanderbilt's Patagonian palace has become a place of relaxation and comfort, the dream house next door.

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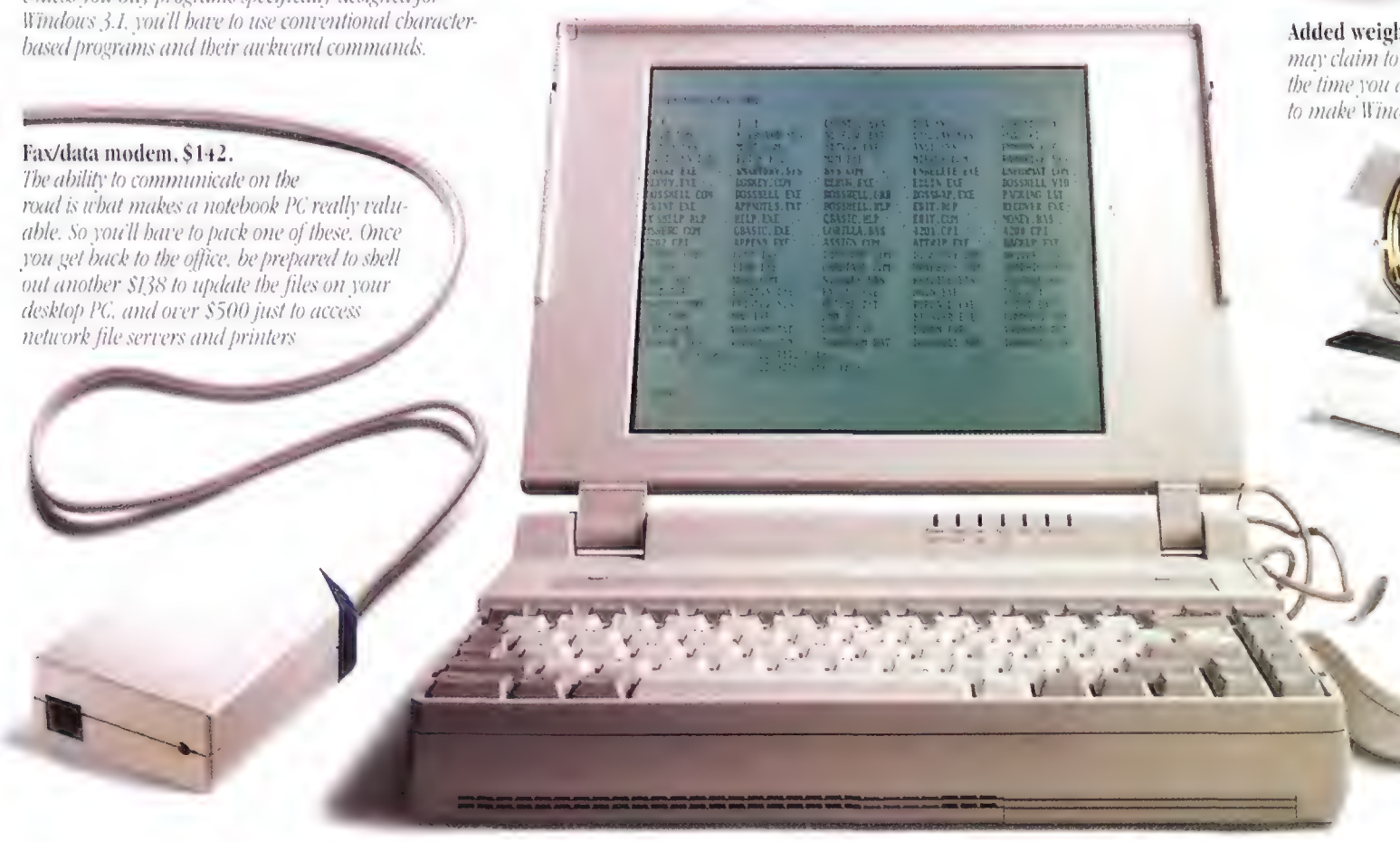

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The hard way:

1. Purchase an external network adapter.
2. Install the network adapter.
3. Connect the network cable.
4. Plug in AC power supply if needed.
5. Install network software and configure parameters.
6. Start Windows.
7. Run Windows Setup to load network software.
8. Restart.
9. Start Windows.
10. Start File Manager.
11. Select the desired file server.

The easy way:

1. Connect the network cable.
2. Open Chooser.
3. Select AppleTalk "Active" button.
4. Select desired file server.

How to retrieve a deleted file.

The hard way:

1. Purchase a utility program.
2. Install it on your computer.
3. Restart the computer.
4. Start Windows.
5. Start the utility program.
6. Start the unerase feature.
7. Find the directory where your file existed.
8. Click on that directory.
9. Select the deleted file.
10. Choose unerase command.

The easy way:

1. Double-click on the trash can.
2. Drag the deleted file out of the trash can.

How to rename a directory.

The hard way:

1. Double-click on the Main group in Program Manager.
2. Start File Manager.
3. Highlight the directory you want to rename.
4. Select "Rename" from the file menu.
5. Type in a new name for the directory (must be 8 characters or less).
6. Go to Program Manager if needed.
7. For each application in the renamed directory, select "Properties" from the file menu.
8. For each application in that directory, change the command line to reflect the new path to the application program.

The easy way:

1. Highlight the directory (folder) you want to rename.
2. Type a new name (up to 31 characters).

How to add an external hard disk drive.

The hard way:

1. Purchase a parallel-to-SCSI adapter.
2. Connect it to the parallel port.
3. Plug the drive into the adapter.
4. Insert the adapter's installation disk in drive A:.
5. Select drive A:.
6. Type "INSTALL."
7. Select appropriate options for your drive.
8. Select appropriate drive for software installation.
9. Restart.
10. Run installation test program.

The easy way:

1. Plug the drive into the SCSI port.
2. Start up the PowerBook.

How to play a sound.

The hard way:

1. Purchase a sound upgrade kit.
2. Attach sound upgrade hardware.
3. Install sound upgrade's software drivers.
4. Start the sound recorder program.
5. Select Open from the file menu.
6. Select the sound file you want to play.
7. Choose OK.
8. Click on the Play button.

The easy way:

1. Double-click on the sound's icon.

How to add a pointing device.

The hard way:

1. Purchase a pointing device (such as a mouse or trackball).
2. Open notebook's back panel.
3. Attach appropriate port adapter to pointing device (if other than 9-pin).
4. Connect pointing device to proper port.
5. Choose appropriate clamp arms.
6. Attach pointing device to clamp arms and adjust tilt angle.
7. Start the computer.
8. Install driver software.
9. Restart.

The easy way:

1. The trackball is built in.

Macintosh. The more you do, the easier it gets.

Marc Smith, poetry-slam originator and promoter, kicks off noisy session by explaining the ground rules.

By Richard Conniff

'Please, audience, do not applaud a mediocre poem'

The 'slam' isn't a poetry reading in a salon, it's a poetry contest in a saloon. Does this sound like a Chicago idea, or what?

Hello, friend, and welcome to the Green Mill, an Uptown Chicago jazz club where the bucolic murals are yellow with varnish and ancient cigar smoke, and the fixtures haven't changed much since the 1920s. "Machine Gun" Jack McGurn once held court here, and entertainer Joe E. Lewis got his throat slit to discourage him from taking his talents elsewhere. But that was then. Tonight the emcee is a tall, skinny guy with his hair pulled back in a pony tail who is talking about—what?—*poetry.*

"Here's a news update," he begins. He has a manic Peter Boyle gleam in his eyes and a working-class accent in which a word like "news" is drawn out as if it were spelled "nooz." "We went to San Francisco and we kicked their . . ." What he is talking about is competitive poetry: Second City versemongers going eyeball-to-eyeball with the best of the Bay. "Some of them were pretty lame," he adds. "But we held back, too. Oh, by the way, I'm Marc Smith."

"So what?" the audience shouts.

He grins. Then, for the benefit of out-of-towners, he adds: "Some of the poetry tonight will be very good. Some will be very bad. If it's bad, snap your fingers. That means it stinks. If it gets worse, stamp your feet. If it's god-awful, groan. And if it's so bad it's good, which happens sometimes, yell 'Belmont!' That's the name of a local street. We don't know why we do this, we just do. Please, audience, do not applaud a mediocre poem. Just stare at the poet, and eventually he's going to get the idea."

Photographs by Steven E. Gross

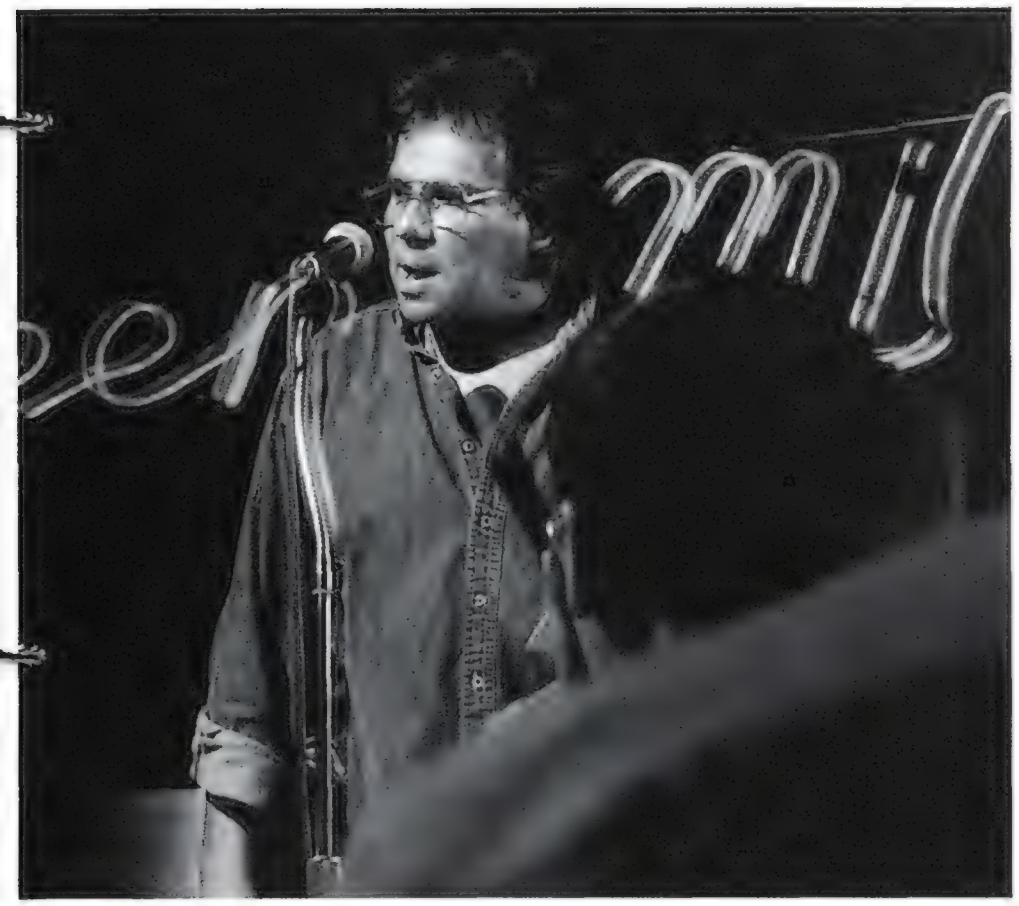
Bookseller David Kodeski offers "Picked Last": "My team groans / As deep as the depth / Of their puberty will allow / ... They mutter / 'Thanks ... wuss' ..."

Featured guest Sarah Underwood, a local actor and musician, warms up the Sunday evening crowd with a rousing satirical act laced with saxophone playing.

What Smith is talking about is not a poetry reading but a poetry "slam," a noisy, almost oxymoronic idea that got its start in Chicago six years ago. The slam isn't a kind of poetry, like rap or imagism or cyberpunk video poetry or even iambic pentameter; it's an event in which all of the above may do literary battle, and a cowboy poet can get whomped by a free-verser introduced in boxing-ring cadences as "The *Po*-lish A-*mer*-ican Pur-*rit*-ty Boy from *Ni*-agara Falls." More than 20 cities in this country and abroad now have an active competitive poetry scene, and the third annual international poetry slam championship takes place this October 14-17 in Boston.

This is a development some university poets greet with dismay. They scorn the slam as a verse "gong show" or worse, and part of Smith's shtick is to return this contempt in four-part harmony. The competition starts to the tune of "Makin' Whoopee," with the audience joining in on a verse about academic poets being beamed up out of their solemn lecture halls and onto the stage at the Green Mill, in front of 200 beer-drinking esthetes: "You see 'em squirm, they start to twist, / How did they get here, a place like this(t)? / They make it plain, / This ain't their game, / slamming poetry."

But beneath the attitude, Smith's slam also has the covertly high-minded purpose of reconnecting the American people to poetry, any poetry. The idea is to get people relaxed, keep them entertained, and in between slip them brief lessons on the emotional power of poetic language. Smith is almost visionary on the need to rescue poetry from its lowly status in the na-



Unemployed machinist E. Donald Two-Rivers talks of homelessness: ". . . the Chicago winds are . . . / wild mustangs / that hammer meanness / into the streets . . ."

Student Jeanette Green evokes childhood images: "Even at 3 she is lean and delicate and . . . distant / Allison at 5 is plumlike and slightly / gooey . . ."

tion's cultural life. A 42-year-old former construction worker, he is barely eking out a living these days as a full-time poety-slam promoter. He attended his first conventional poetry reading with his manuscripts hidden in a folded newspaper. "The very word 'poetry' repels people," he says. "Why is that? Because of what schools have done to it. The slam gives it back to the people. It's like football: you don't have to be a professional. We need to have touch-football poets. We need people to talk poetry to each other. That's how we communicate our values, our hearts, the things that we've learned that make us who we are."

But stop right there, fickle reader! I can see your mind going slack and gummy at the merest hint of anything to do with the "p" word that is remotely didactic. I see you harking back to the high school teacher who tricked you into mistaking a restaurant menu for something by the Beat poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, thereby forever shattering your confidence that you could understand what poetry was or might be. Or maybe you are thinking of the college professor who deconstructed the cryptoimperialist subtext in "The Song of Hiawatha." You are thinking, in other words, that poetry is, at worst, a pretentious flimflam and, at best, a bore.

So let us get back to the slam, an event deeply rooted in Chicago's unique psychology, which is to say that it is enthusiastically combative, a little rough at the edges and full of populist appeal—populist with maybe an added hint of image-consciousness, now that the children of the city's blue-collar work force have clambered up into more genteel occupations. It's said that "a fistfight has always been the best metaphor for Chicago," so in the new Chicago a metaphorical fistfight between poets makes a kind of sense.

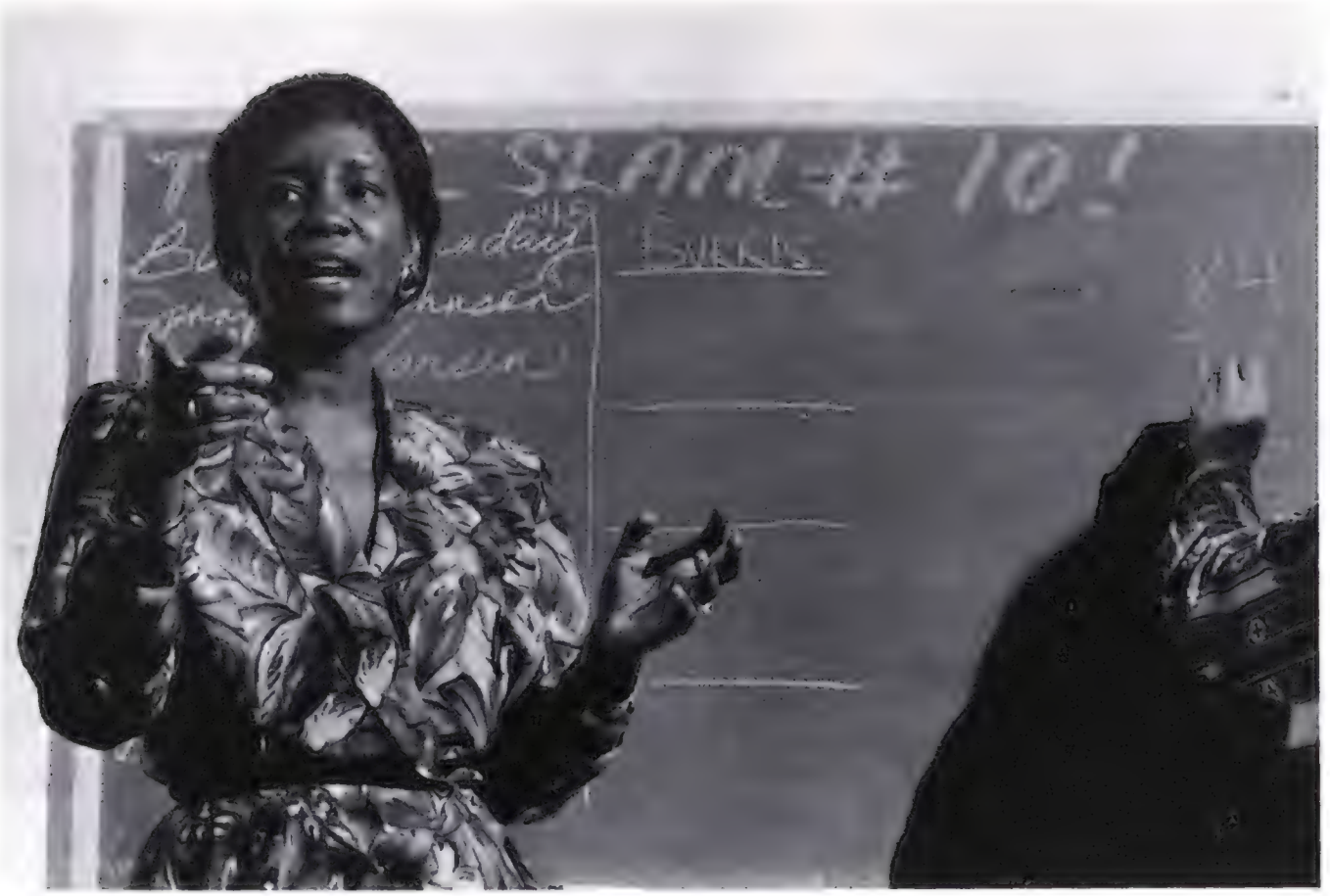
Nobody actually gets hit, you understand. Smith, who originated the event, called it a slam in part for the uneffete sound of it, and also to commemorate a grand slam he saw the Chicago Cubs' Ernie Banks hit when he was a boy.

What happens on any Sunday evening at the Green Mill is that poets of all stripes present themselves at an open-mike session, followed by a featured poet, followed finally by the slam, in which two or more combatants face off. All of them risk a discerning, sometimes vocal reception.

When a poet in the open-mike session reads a bumptious poem, pandering to what he thinks the crowd will like, Smith jumps in before the poet can start another effort. "Is this one a poem and not a story?" Smith calls out from the audience, tongue-in-cheek but also perfectly serious. "It was hard to find the music in that other one."

In the slam itself, the poets risk more than mere heckling. This is, after all, a competition. The method of scoring is subject to change without notice but it always works, as if this were the Olympics. After each contender performs his or her piece, three judges chosen from the audience hold up their scorecards—

Richard Conniff, a connoisseur of barbed invective and a frequent contributor to these pages, is editor of The Devil's Book of Verse, *an anthology.*



After winning five slam championships in Chicago, poet Patricia Smith took the idea with her when she moved to Boston, where she presides over events in front of chalkboard at a local bookstore.

6.2, 7.5, 9.1, or whatever. The highest total score wins the round. On this particular evening, the bout will go to the first poet to take three rounds.

The worst they can do, Smith announces to soothe the quaking egos of the evening's poets, is to "tie the lowest score ever, because it was minus infinity, for the dirtiest, dumbest, stupidest poem I have ever heard in my life." As an afterthought, just in case, Smith playfully reminds the judges that minus infinity squared is a positive number.

The best they can do is to draw the audience up by its collective soul into a moment of attentive and absolute stillness. Patricia Smith (no relation to Marc) does it, for example, in a poem about seeing a neighbor lose her baby in a house fire: "I locked my eyes on the flames like a brainless child, / like a hungry woman with heat my only language, / while the woman's screams wrote a bitter poem on the hot air / and lean shirtless boys belched Budweiser toward the flames."

The winner of one week's slam goes on to bang heads (please, metaphorically) with subsequent winners, leading in time to the coronation of the Uptown Poetry Slam Champion, who is in effect the performance poetry king or queen of Chicago. All this for grand prizes of 10, 25, 50, even 100 bucks.

It is good poetry for the money, too. If the measure of Chicago writers is how well they handle what the city dishes out, then they succeed, with poems full of Chicago's rawness and beauty, its bluster and its depravity—a word which, in this case, does not refer exclusively to its political life. David Kodeski, a young man with round steel-rimmed glasses and a bookish manner, gets up and delivers a poem about the refined urban pleasure of loathing yuppy (bleeps) as they infiltrate yet another neighborhood with briefcases "Full of important papers / And the receipt from today's business lunch." (The trouble is that his object of loathing turns out, on closer examination, to be his pal.) A poem about fervid love (hooted down for emotional mushiness and exceeding the three-minute time limit) is followed by one about a couplet-slinging cowboy poet wandering in a land where the "whores are six feet tall and tough as barn siding," and then, in the sort of violent mood swing to which slams are prone, by a chilling, precise poem about a father who rapes and murders his 4-year-old child.

Smith himself closes the evening with "Ground Zero," a favorite with locals, about an ordinary Chicago guy entering a fat-cat political banquet on the blast waves of nuclear apocalypse. He delivers it with the gallows gusto of the pilot who goes down with the bomb at the end of *Dr. Strangelove.* In Chicago—hey!—they know how to have a good time.

We'll switch now to satellite feed for a spirited debate between two Chicago-area poetry experts. Paul Hoover, a novelist and avant-garde poet who is editing an anthology of experimental poetry from 1950 to the present, has serious reservations about the slam. He says it reduces poetry to a product: "They set out not to discover a truth in language, or to create a poetry of invention, but to please an audience." Whereas the poetry he prefers is rigorously difficult and innovative, slam poetry he regards as dated. People think it's hip, he says, but in fact its roots go all the way back to the Beat-style poetry of the 1950s. He believes the slam reflects the "decline of books at the hands of television and rock music." Dancing like a butterfly but stinging like Ambrose Bierce on a bad day, Hoover says "the

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In his slam debut, established Chicago poet José (El Cheyo) Bono (right) gives it his best shot—but bombs. When he is done, two of the judges hold up scores on cards (above), reflecting dim view of performance.

slam is to poetry what Geraldo is to television. It keeps your attention."

In the opposite corner is Reginald Gibbons of Northwestern University. He edits *TriQuarterly*, a highly regarded literary magazine, and has performed for audiences at the Green Mill. "I don't know how anybody can see this as a threat to Western civilization," he says. "It's not something against book poetry. It's something more. Performance is a different kind of animal. "Most of the people who read or perform are not going to be very good writers," he says, but that's also true of the unsolicited manuscripts he gets at work. Occasionally, he has found enough "fierceness of composition" to publish slam poetry in *TriQuarterly*. The most significant thing about the slam, though, is "there are audiences that want to go out and make an evening of listening to words."

The slam, like rap, makes poetry cool. Cool enough that even some of the slammers are becoming increasingly uneasy about commercialization.

Bob Holman, who started a slam in Manhattan, put together a performance poetry film for the Public Broadcasting Service. Later, he met with executives at the cable channel MTV, where the format of rock videos and standup comedy was growing thin enough to make poetry a possible alternative. "They said, 'Content is making a comeback.' It was like they were talking about a pair of sneakers. They told me that 'meaning' was going to be very big in the '90s." Madonna, looking for the next big trend after torpedo brassieres, has announced that she plans to include "Beatnik-style poetry" in her next album.

The raucous atmosphere of the slam makes it easy to forget that the performers take it seriously. "It's a combination of poetry and theater," says Lisa Buscani, a 28-year-old slam star, disguised by day as a mild-mannered editorial coordinator for the Chicago Dental Society. Buscani doesn't mumble. She doesn't slouch to the microphone at the Green Mill with a three-ring binder full of dog-eared manuscripts. She is resolutely "off manuscript," meaning that she has memorized her pieces and delivers them as if they came straight from the heart, or possibly the spleen. Performance for her means the dubious raised eyebrow, the "who me?" hands splayed on chest, the overly emphatic pronunciation of the *t* in "neat," and the index finger jabbed up at a tyrannical teacher of vivid memory.

Paul Hoover is correct in saying the slam language is not intellectually difficult. "People need a lot of image meat," says Lisa Buscani. "They need to be able to sink their teeth into your metaphors and similes. You can't get away with some of the airier stuff you get away with on the page." The writing has to be understandable on first hearing, rather than fifteenth reading. Moreover, it tends to be about subjects ordinary people can identify with, or as Buscani puts it, "It's not about Zeus coming down and schtupping swans."

If some critics regard these traits as defects, Buscani sees them as simply "part of the form, just as a haiku has so many syllables." Slammers are quick to name

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Another judge awards a so-so score of 4 (out of a possible 10). The first poet to take three rounds wins.

print poets whose work would stand up in the slam format—for example, Dylan Thomas ("Yeah, no problem. Tens right across the board. Well, depending on the judges"). On the other hand, a selection from Chicago's most famous poet, Carl Sandburg, gets kiboshed. Marc Smith springs Sandburg's "Death Snips Proud Men" from memory one night at the Green Mill, then has second thoughts: "I think Carl was screwed up on that. He never rewrote enough."

On the card that evening is a single, five-round bout, featuring a new poet, Andrew J. Rashkow, who uses the name "Drew Jay" because it's shorter and easier for the hip crowd at the Green Mill to remember. They might not be so receptive, he thinks, if he let on that, by day, he manages a store and sells "lifestyle furniture, closet organizers, silk flowers . . ." His opponent, "Happy Poet" Billy Lombardo, a youth director for a local parish, just spent his Sunday afternoon working crowd control at Wrigley Field. Like most slammers, these two are not yet 30. In the evening's early sessions, they sit with friends, gauging crowd reaction and sizing up other poets: "Dave Kodeski's pretty tough. He mixes it up well. He's got some humorous stuff, and he can be serious too."

The moon is full, at least inside the Green Mill, and even during the open-mike session the poets appear to be engaged in battle, if only with their own hormones. They deliver poems about—shall we say?—love, full of phrases such as "I feel the strong burning desire of you in all that I do . . ." or ". . . his body a temple of testosterone." A poet presents a piece of "rhapsodic pornography" about the Gabor sisters, accompanied by Hungarian folk music on the cello.

"I have one about love, one about pain," a poet begins. "Which one do you want first?"

"Pain!" the audience shouts.

Then politics rears its ugly head, with a thoughtful consideration of the premise that, on his death, U.S. Senator Jesse Helms has donated his body to art. Finally, a poet hits all the hot buttons with one called "Sex and Politics." The poem recounts a woman's experience returning from Germany, where she heard "poetry of meaning," poetry defending the flame of democracy, only to be mortified back home in the Green Mill to hear poems only about sex. In this poem, the woman takes a piece of the Berlin Wall from her pocketbook and (in the spirit of the slam) flings it at the sex-obsessed poet onstage, hitting him square in the face. Unfortunately, this serves to increase his ardor . . .

Now it's time for the main bout. The winner will be taking on the reigning Uptown Poetry Slam champ. Marc Smith introduces the judges for the slam: a teacher of English as a second language, a leader of workshops on stress and alternative medicine, and a couple, Mario and Lisa. "They both wait tables. Lisa says Mario is a good listener. Mario says that Lisa has a great sense of humor *and* is funny. They're sitting very close together. How cute." Rule number one, he informs the judges, is "You must listen to the poem. We find that when you don't listen, the audience gets very angry."

Drew Jay picks up the theme of the evening and runs with it. His mind is a temple of testosterone. Like articles in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, his poems fall unequally into two categories, "Sex" and "Other." He reads in a brash, self-confident voice, his eyebrows popping over glossy black eyes. His hair is slicked back, and he has a vulpine smile. "This one's about a date I had," he says, at the start of the third round.

"They're *all* about dates you had," Smith complains from the audience. (He is like the chorus in a Shakespeare play: "I come up and make my little comment, and at least the audience hears one person is in tune with them and is speaking their mind.")

A whack for tucking in his shirt

Billy Lombardo, on the other hand, wins points for sounding like a nice South Side Chicago kid. He has a frail, vulnerable voice, and his poems start in everyday life and then veer off. In one, for instance, his father whacks him in the head for tucking in his shirt at mass one Christmas, and suddenly Billy is thinking about the Bethlehem innkeeper of biblical ill-fame, the one who had the incredible bad luck to turn away Joseph and Mary: "and his bones / are shifting in his . . . grave / every Christmas / and making that hollow sound / cheap wooden wind chimes make / and he's turning and saying, / 'lee' me alone, lee' me alone . . . / I'm telling you, it was . . . crowded. / there was a census going on / do you understand that? it was like / . . .

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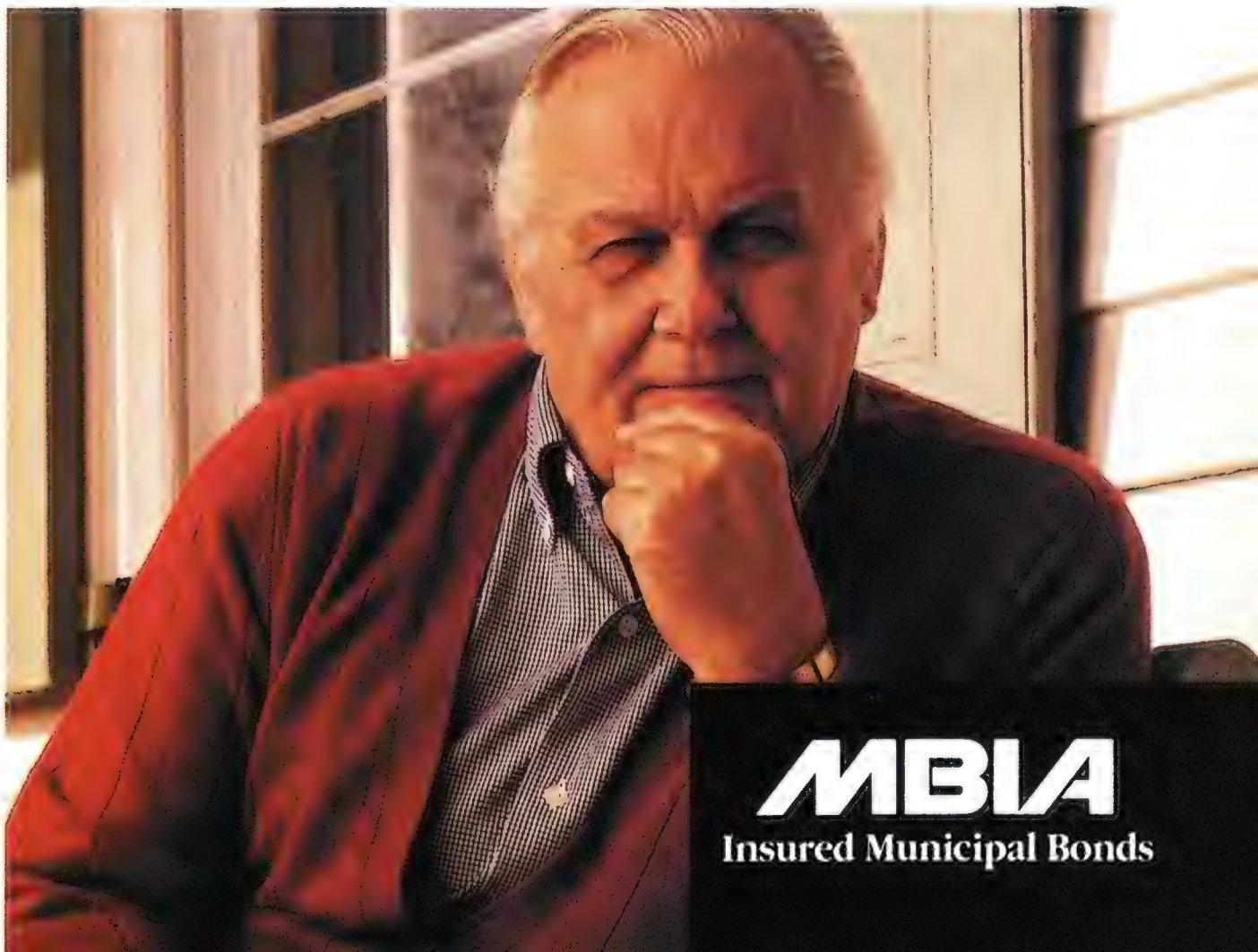

Woodstock in Bethlehem. / the place was jammed with pregnant women."

There is strategy in play here. The contenders choose their poems carefully. If one poet is known to have a killer poem about a father, the other may try to preempt it by reading one about a mother. If one poet is serious, the other may try to heighten the mood or demolish it with humor. "What do you think I should do now?" they ask their friends when a rival is scoring big. Smith reminds the crowd between rounds that there is—oooh—$50 at stake. At four boxes to a buck, this represents enough mac and cheese to keep a poet scratching away for months.

After four rounds, slickness appears to be triumphing over substance ("Come on, judges, pay attention," someone mutters), and Drew Jay is even with Billy Lombardo. Afterward, Drew Jay recounts his strategy for the final round: "They wanted fluff. I was just playing to the audience."

Drew Jay's last effort is a humorous piece about—are you sitting down?—a relationship. Billy Lombardo responds with a poem about schoolchildren at lunchtime. The judges hold up their score cards. Unbelievable! Billy loses by two-tenths of a point.

The crowd takes it badly, though not badly enough for Smith to call in his "official judge escort service." He manages to smooth over the moment with one of his own poems. Then the audience heads out into the street. On an evening when they might otherwise have sat slack-jawed at home, staring at the television set, they have instead spent three hours listening to language and ideas. They may yet go home and look up that Sandburg poem.

They may discover that the state of Illinois has a living poet laureate, Gwendolyn Brooks, who is pretty cool. They may get the crazy idea that poetry belongs not to literary magazines or universities or even poets laureate, but to them, and that it has something to do with their own lives. And then—good God!—they might sit down and write the stuff. Considering the state of poetry in America, Marc Smith figures worse things could happen.

At slam's end, Marc Smith (left) announces winner. Prestige and grand prize of $10 go to store manager Andrew Rashkow, a.k.a. Drew Jay; his poems tend to fall unequally into two categories: "Sex" and "Other."

Different Schools Of Thought Thrive In The Same Company

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Painting from 1914 by German artist Michael Zeno Diemer renders Rome's aqueducts as they might have appeared in the first century A.D. Two channels run atop arches at left, and three ride piggyback at right.

By Dora Jane Hamblin

The grand design of 23 centuries ago is still watering Rome

And as though that weren't quite enough, its aqueducts replenish the hundreds of fountains that continue to refresh, renew and enchant

The lady in blue jeans and her corduroy-clad husband strolled across a scrubby countryside near Tivoli, Italy, aiming at what appeared to be a particularly untidy hedgerow.

"It's there," the lady proclaimed. "The Barberini bridge and the channel of the new Anio aqueduct." ("New" because it was so late, built in the first century A.D. instead of from 272 to 269 B.C., when the "old" Anio was built.) Then the distinguished Professoressa Cecilia Roncaioli Lamberti, who teaches classical literature and Latin at the University of Rome, disappeared, like Alice down the rabbit hole.

Only her voice came back: "Come along, you two!" So her husband and I slithered feetfirst through a hole she had made in the prickly vegetation, and into the rock-cut channel of a Roman engineering triumph: a conduit about 2½ feet wide and 6 feet high, with traces of waterproof cement still visible on the walls and the discoloration of years of flow on the lower courses. Once it was even deeper, carrying a river of water to Rome, but now it is clogged by vegetation and the long-ago buildup of calcium deposits.

When we had scrambled outside again she said, "I'll show you my favorite," and we went to a single soaring arch, beautiful enough to stop the breath, with a stream rippling underneath and trees climbing the slopes of the hills. It is the remains of the Ponte San Pietro, which crossed this valley to take the water of the Marcia aqueduct, built from 144 to 140 B.C., to Rome.

"In any other country this would be a national monument," I said.

"Of course," they replied in unison. "Here there is too much. High arches fall, miles of rock-cut channel fill, and nobody cares."

"Very nice, mark it down, dear"

The Lambertis care, and they are not quite alone. They are the latest of a long line of amateur archaeologists who study the routes of the ancient aqueducts, traces of the roads, the evidence of ancient repair. As we walked away from the beautiful arch, the signora noticed a place where road machines had sliced off a bit of hillside, and her sharp eyes spotted something. "Kneel down, dear," she instructed her engineer husband, and she climbed onto his shoulders to be hoisted up for a look at the newly exposed brickwork of one of the "wells" the Romans built for ventilation and so workmen could enter the aqueducts to clean and repair them. "Very nice," she said, "mark it down, dear," and her husband unfurled a map and made a new mark in red to indicate the lost channel. The Lambertis (until his recent death) spent their spare time for more than 20 years doing this kind of walking-and-looking research. The current superintendent of the Roman administration's department of ancient aqueducts, Giuseppina Pisani Sartorio, said frankly, "They know more about the routes and conditions of bridges, aqueducts, parts that are falling to pieces, than we do. When we organized a 1986 show on the ancient water resources, we needed them for both information and photos."

Long before the Lambertis, generations of archaeologists and antiquities lovers, professional and amateur, had set off to find and study the remains of the old aqueducts, and painters and poets had rhapsodized over them. One of the greatest of these researchers was archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani who, in the last decades of the 19th century, did exhaustive studies on all the ancient water sources and courses. One of Lanciani's most devoted students was a young Englishman, Thomas Ashby, who became director of the British School at Rome and spent most of his life studying the aqueducts and roads of antiquity, writing voluminously and leaving meticulous maps. Dr. Esther B. Van Deman, of the American Academy in Rome, investigated ancient bridges and aqueducts for 30 years and is reputed to have been the only archaeologist in all Italy who could date bricks in ancient structures by the taste of the mortar that held them in place.

Cecilia Lamberti always refers to the aqueducts as "he" or "him," because in the Italian language all nouns have gender and "aqueduct" is masculine. But don't despair, ladies, "water" and "fountain" are feminine, and it was to serve both that the aqueducts were born. They still soar over reaches of France, of Spain, of Jordan and Turkey and North Africa, and everywhere the Romans once were. They are as true a testimony to Roman grandeur as the Colosseum or the Forum, the roads or the triumphal arches, and they served a nobler purpose: bringing water.

Say "fountain" to somebody and wait for the echo. "Drinking," a toddler might contribute, or "of youth," a sentimental elder. From much of the world, "Trevi" or "Piazza Navona" or just "Rome." Because no other city ever had so many, or so famous, or so beautiful.

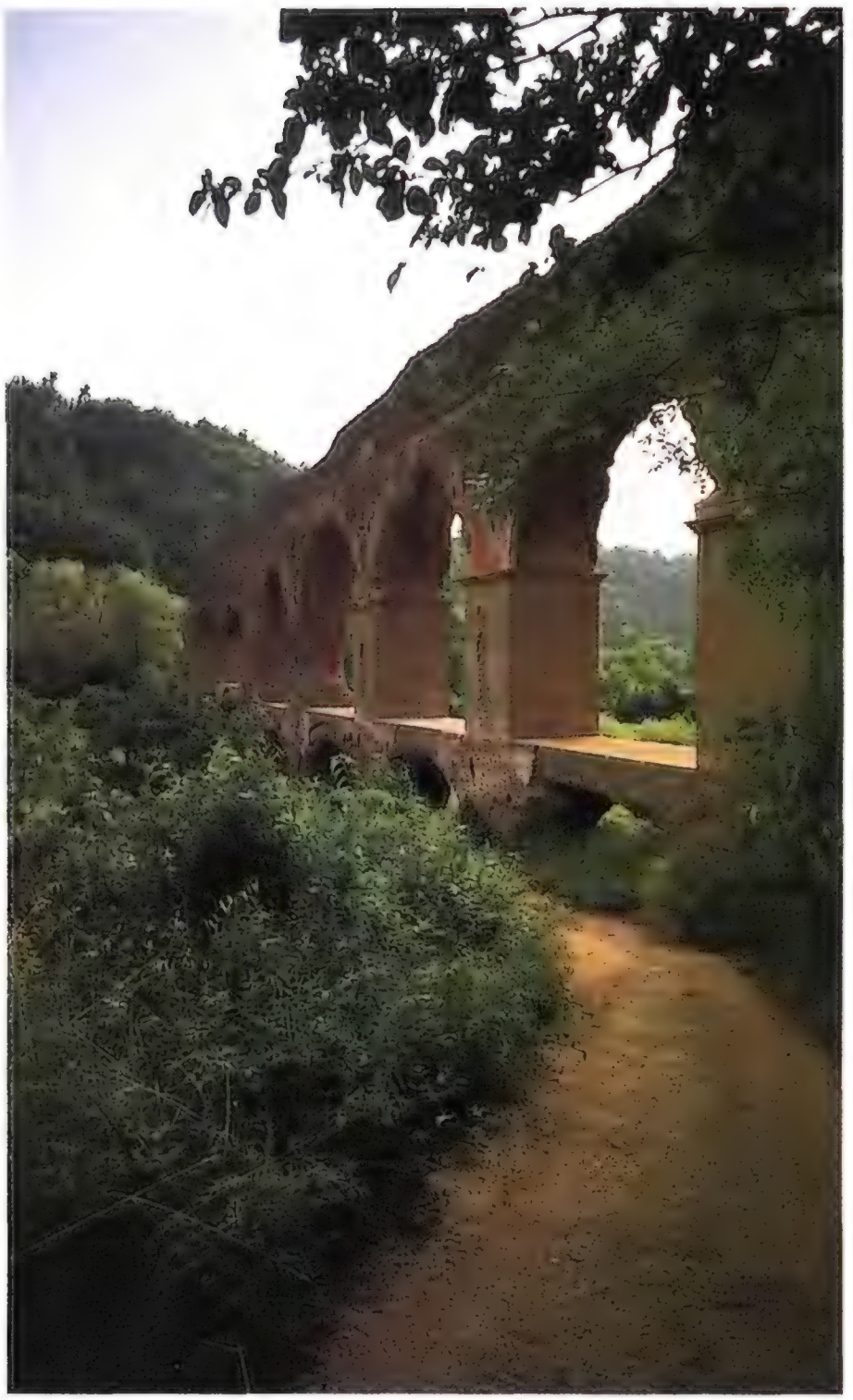
Once there were between 1,200 and 1,300 public fountains in Rome, plus 11 great baths, 867 lesser baths, 15 nymphaea, or monumental decorated showpiece fountains, and 2 artificial lakes for imperial naval exhibitions. Eleven aqueducts poured more than 38 million gallons of water into the city every day. Nobody had ever seen so much water except, of course, Noah.

The Romans themselves loved it and patted themselves on the back for being so clever. Possibly they remembered that for more than four centuries of their early life they had no water at all except some shallow wells, a few springs and the river Tiber. The river was drinkable in 500 B.C., and some say even into the 16th century, though if one were to suffer the misfortune of

The temptation to venture out for a convenient sip at La Barcaccia proves irresistible to this child.

Photographs by H. Brooks Walker

The waters of Rome



Restoring 400-year-old Anio Vetus in second century, Hadrian built Ponte della Mola to shorten its course.

falling into it today, drowning would be a merciful end.

To the rescue of relatively waterless Rome came, in 312 B.C., one of those magnetic autocrats reminiscent a bit of Charles de Gaulle or even FDR, a proud man with a vision. This one's name was Appius Claudius Caecus, and he was a Censor, or magistrate, of Rome. It was the procedure then for the Senate to order public works and charge the two Censors with delivering them. Appius Claudius was assigned to build an all-weather road leading south out of Rome into the heartland of some recalcitrant tribes, and his fellow Censor, Gaius Plautius, was charged with finding water for the burgeoning city. Plautius discovered springs about ten miles east of Rome, but as it turned out, neither project was complete when the Censors' terms of office ran out. Gaius Plautius dutifully resigned, but Appius Claudius refused. So eager was he to have the new water supply bear his name that he defied the Senate and the people of Rome until the Aqua Appia, the aqueduct bringing water from those springs, was finished and entered the thirsty city, the first of the famous 11. It is ironic that today his road, the Appian Way, is far more famous than the aqueduct upon which he insisted.

Eight more aqueducts were built during the next four centuries. By the end of the first century A.D. Rome's Curator Aquarum, or water administrator, an exemplary citizen called Sextus Julius Frontinus, could strike a telling blow for Roman virtuosity: "How can you compare the useless Pyramids of Egypt, or the beautiful nonproductive works of the Greeks, with these constructions?" he asked. It was a rhetorical question, but he had a point: people yearned more for water, the sustainer and cleanser of life, than for monuments. At least one Greek, the eminent geographer Strabo, agreed with him. "The Romans take great care of three things above others, which the Greeks neglected," he wrote. "That is in opening roads, building aqueducts, and sending the residue underground into sewers." Actually, it was the Etruscans who invented the sewers of Rome, but the Romans were quick learners.

That miracle of Roman engineering

The aqueducts that provided all this richness are so dramatically grand when visible, and so old and so eternal, that they spawn myths and misconceptions. Many people, for example, have thought that the elegant high arches were meant to carry the water up high enough to service the famous Seven Hills of Rome. Not true. The arches were made to slow the water down, to restrain it so it wouldn't burst the primitive lead tubes that were installed beneath the city—a feat that still astounds modern engineers, who wonder how the Romans calculated and achieved a slope of nearly 10 feet

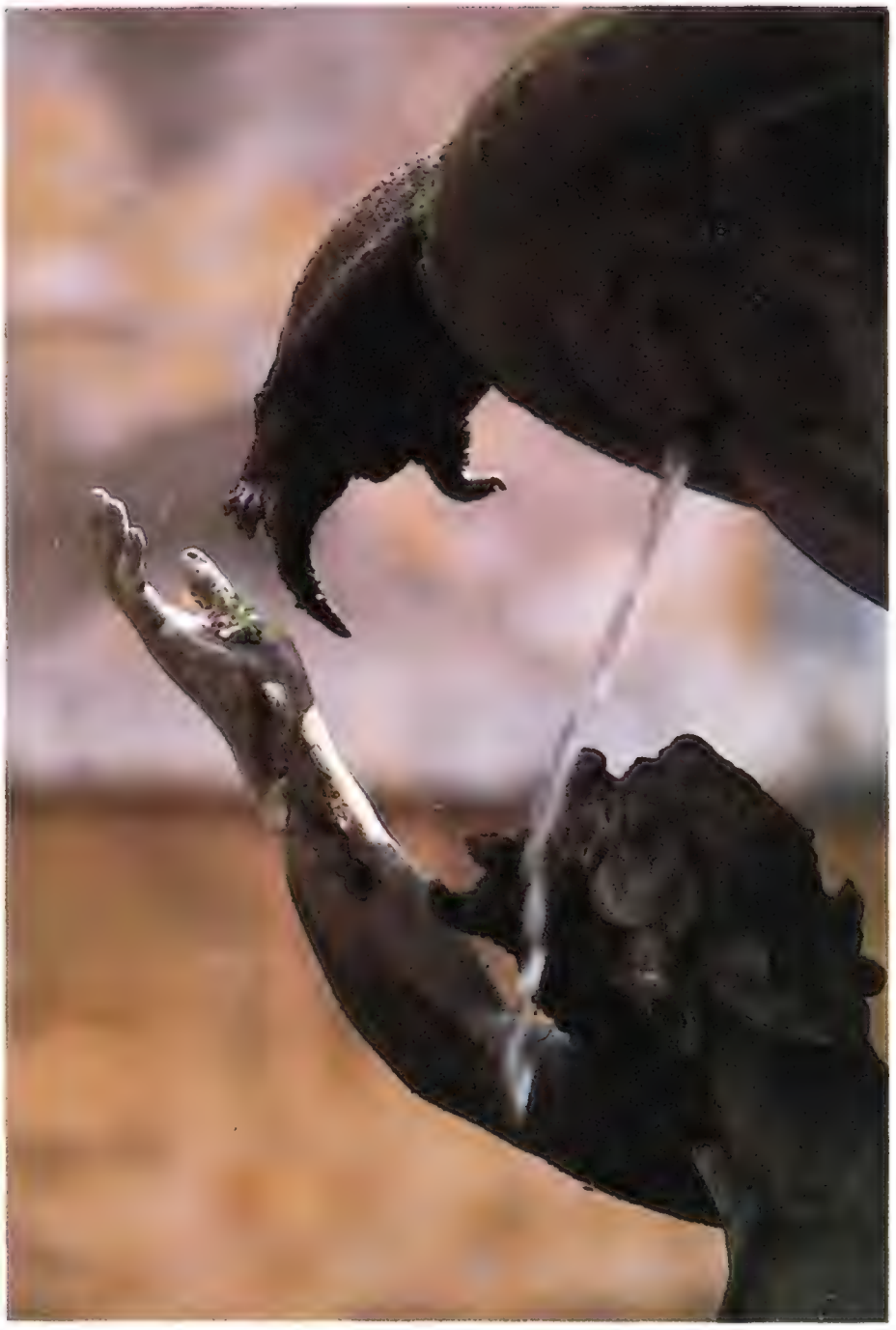
Seven aqueducts intersected at Porta Maggiore; five aboveground, two below. Conduits on original white arches indicate the flow capacity.

Cecilia Lamberti located Anio Novus behind a brier thicket.

Water for Rome once coursed through channels atop this venerable aqueduct. Saved from development, it is centerpiece of Roma Vecchia's Aqueduct Park, which draws equestrians, joggers, cyclists, aqueduct buffs.

In Piazza Mattei's 16th-century marble Fontana delle Tartarughe, bronze youths ride dolphins.

Each youth lofts one of four bronze turtles, later additions, toward fountain's upper basin.



for every 3,200 feet of rock-cut or arch-borne channel.

Who did all this hard work? In ancient times they were no doubt slaves, prisoners of war and the redoubtable Roman soldiers who built roads and bridges and other things in their spare time. Frontinus wrote in A.D. 97-98 that he had a number of *architecti, libratores* and *plumbarii* (hydraulic engineers with various specialties), a group of educated slave workmen called the *familia aquaria*, or "water family," some administrators and a lot of other specialists. The engineers had a key role in designing and overseeing construction and maintenance. The *familia* was in charge of guarding the routes, plastering where necessary, cleaning, stuccoing, and installing and inspecting the lead and terra-cotta pipes. There were about 700 workers, and they must have been very busy.

Giuseppina Sartorio describes the technique in succinct, modern terms: "Just like a superhighway: bridges across valleys, tunnels through obstructing hills, curves up and around and down hills to avoid steep changes. There is very little new under the sun."

It is another frequent misconception that the aqueducts were mostly aboveground. They were mostly underground. Of the total 270 miles of aqueduct that Frontinus supervised, only 40 miles were aboveground. And, surprising perhaps to moderns, nobody could stop the flow. Once a spring or a lake or a river was channeled into a Roman aqueduct, it was going to Rome, willy-nilly. There is a nice story about the eccentric Queen Christina of Sweden, who visited Rome in the 17th century and admired the fountains in St. Peter's Square. Assuming that they had been turned on in her honor, she graciously gave permission to turn them off, as she had seen them. She was astonished to learn that they ran like that day and night, year after year. Water could be diverted to make urgent repairs by building dams and temporary channels, but it couldn't be stopped.

Of course, the aboveground sections of aqueducts were the most dramatic. The Aqua Marcia, third and longest of the original 11, carried springwater more than 56 miles from east of the city to its governmental

The author's villa once had a well. When its pump failed she was water-deprived, like a medieval Roman; now she really appreciates aqueducts and fountains.

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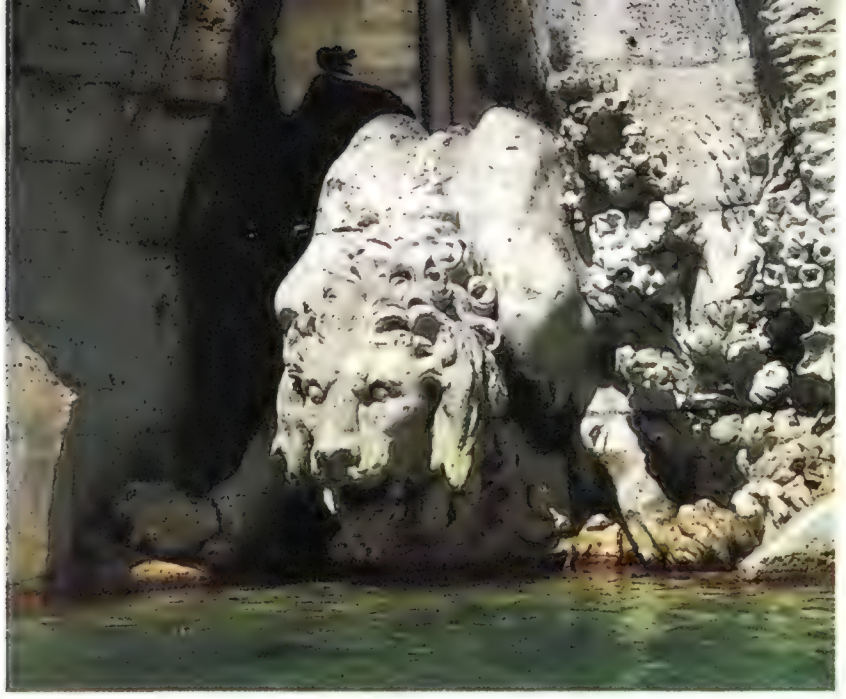
heart, the Capitoline hill. It used the latest word in engineering skill for 50 miles underground, then coursed along 60-foot-high arches to the highest point just outside the city, near today's Porta Maggiore. This majestic aqueduct carried two later channels that rode piggyback on its arches, and at one point on the southeastern approach it was crossed—twice—by another aqueduct, carrying two more water sources in superimposed conduits.

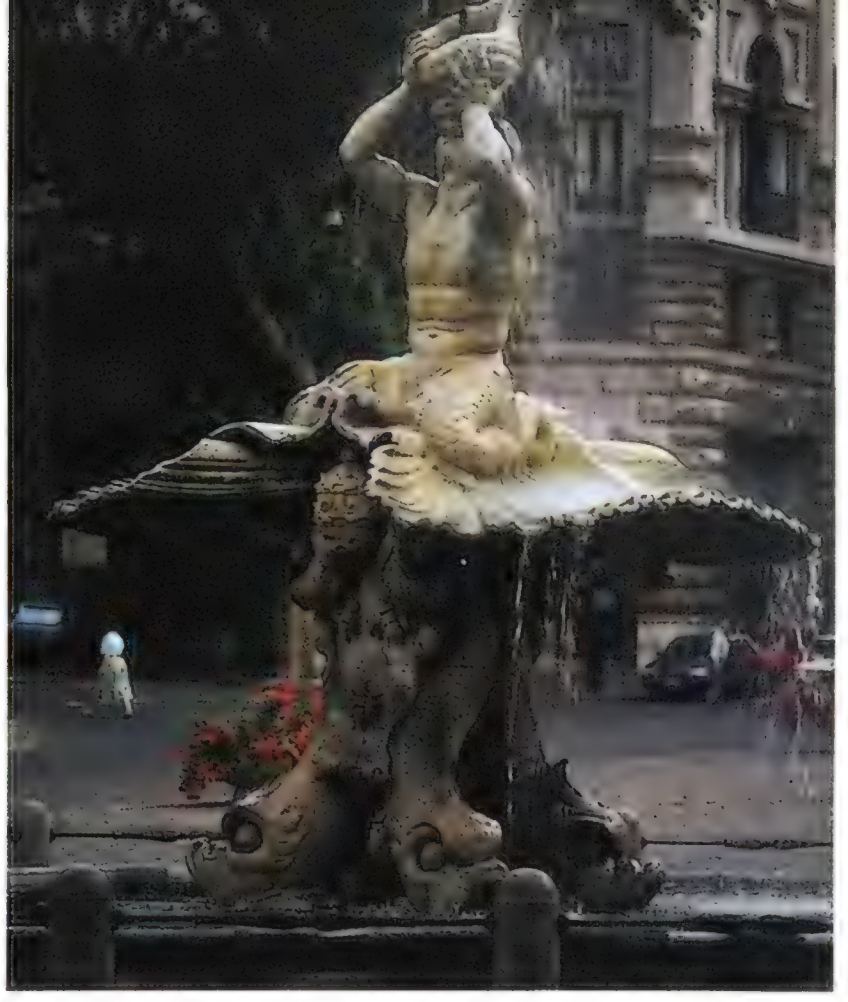
Companion to the myth about lifting the water on arches is the one about aqueducts being so expertly made, they didn't leak. The truth is, their elevated portions leaked like sieves. Still standing in Rome, and noted nowadays primarily as the beginning of the Appian Way, is the stubby ruin of the ancient Porta Capena. Once it carried an aqueduct but was so leaky it became known as the "dripping arch" because anyone passing under it going to or from Rome would receive an instant baptism.

Water in the early days was the gift of the rulers and was distributed first to them; next, to public fountains and baths; last, to private citizens. When the estimable Frontinus took over his duties as Curator he found not only some aqueducts in disrepair but also a mare's nest of illegality: everybody from public officials to private citizens bribed the watermen to tap into the tubes and divert water to their homes and gardens. He set himself to a meticulous study of the entire system, tightened the administration, cleaned up the city and left a monumental written work, *De aquis urbis Romae*, which almost 1,500 years later enabled the Renaissance popes to restore the system.

Each of the early aqueducts ended in a grand *castellum*, or display fountain, carrying a plaque telling everybody which emperor or potentate had paid for the work. There are very few traces today of those great fountains, but they are the direct ancestors of the spectacular ones that now grace the city and most often bear the coat of arms of a self-congratulatory pope.

The decline of the system of great aqueducts began in the fourth century A.D. when Constantine, the first Christian emperor, removed his threatened capital to Constantinople. With him went many of the powerful aristocrats, the artisans, the artists of old Rome. Then came the first Gothic sack of the city in 410, the Vandals in waves, and finally the Goths again under Vitiges, who laid siege in 537. Vitiges and his troops cut every aqueduct they could lay hands on.





Purposeful lion (above) is detail from Bernini's Four Rivers (opposite), a marble and travertine extravaganza in Piazza Navona that took three years to complete.

The Piazza Barberini's Triton, sitting astride a scallop shell supported by dolphins, blows into a conch as veil of spray from the Acqua Felice envelopes him.

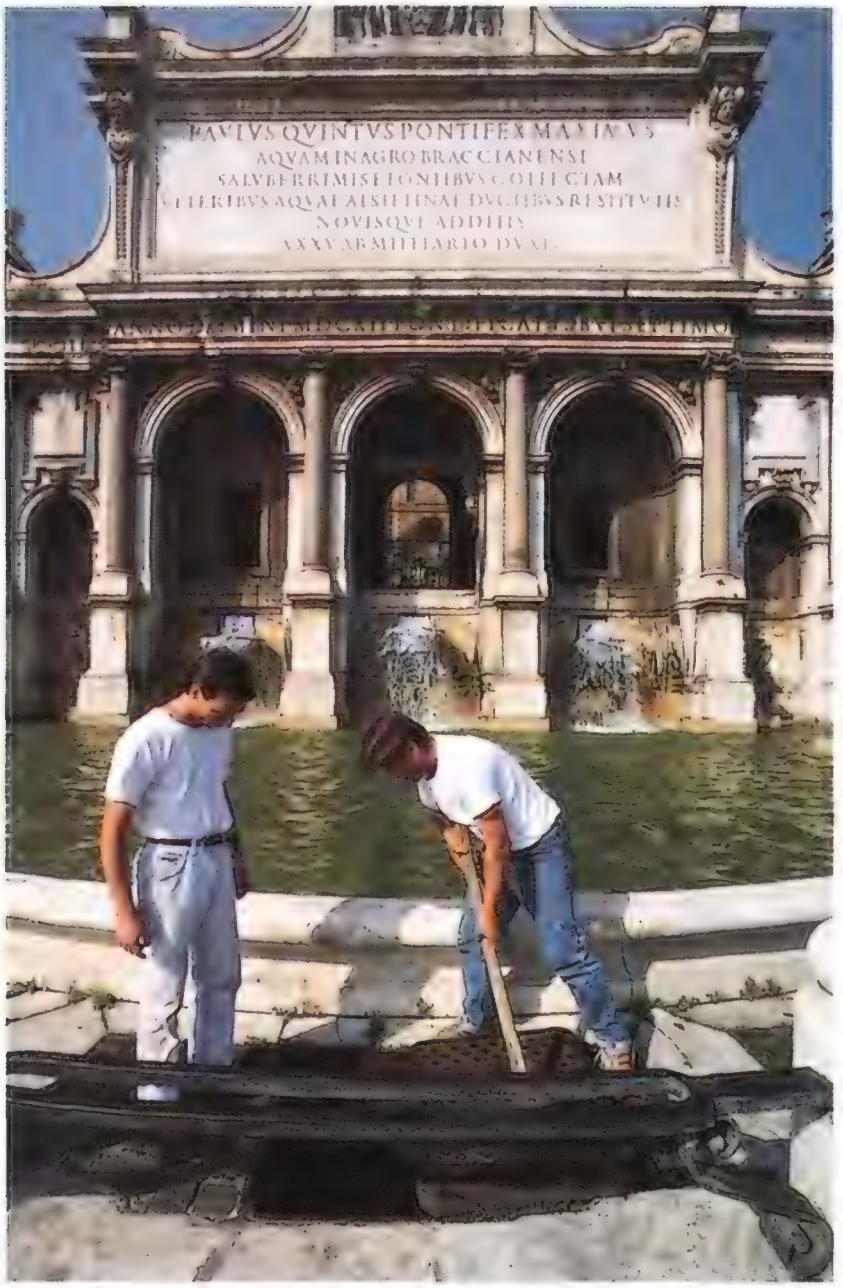
After Vitiges, proclaim many tour guides and even some modern curators of the ancient remains, "Rome went without water for 1,000 years." Things were desperate, all right, but Rome was not entirely without water. There was the Tiber, and the Goths hadn't managed to stop one of the Romans' still-favorite sources, the Aqua Virgo—so called because a maiden, or perhaps a nymph, had revealed its source to military engineers under Marcus Agrippa, friend and son-in-law of the good emperor Augustus, in 19 B.C. Romans thought its waters cooked the best pasta. For centuries, sentimental Englishmen believed that the water of its 15th-century incarnation made the best tea. Fountain lovers knew it sustained that extravagant baroque wonder, the Trevi (p. 101). It was saved from destruction only because it ran almost entirely underground, and Vitiges and his bumbling destroyers didn't happen upon it.

Still, the long night of Rome's Middle Ages was relatively waterless. The first casualties were the gardens, then the great fountains. Few things are as forlorn as a waterless fountain, and shortly the looting began: down-on-their-luck nobles collecting statues for their fortress-palaces, courtyards and gardens; aspiring home builders toppling marble columns for the material; simple citizens prying loose chunks to prop up their own sagging quarters. Once adorned with colonnades, flower beds, handsome marble statues and avenues of trees, the fountains all but vanished.

Finally, popes took over what emperors had done, dispensing doles of grain and water to the populace (the poor could receive theirs after bathing in a washhouse near St. Peter's). But not until the Renaissance did the popes begin major restoration of the aqueducts. Their rebirth came from—who else?—the old faithful Frontinus. A papal secretary named Poggio Bracciolini, poring over documents in the great library of Monte Cassino in 1429, happened upon the lost manuscript of *De aquis urbis Romae*. Using this priceless source, in the mid-15th century Pope Nicholas V ordered restoration and cleaning of the faithful Aqua Virgo, renamed it the Acqua Vergine Antica, and directed it to flow into the city just as it once had, near the site of the present much-loved Trevi.

Why and how this fountain came to occupy such a niche in the world's sentiments is hard to understand. Part of it, no doubt, stems from a 1954 movie called *Three Coins in the Fountain*, an engaging sentimental romp starring Jean Peters, Dorothy McGuire, Clifton Webb and a young heartthrob named Rossano Brazzi. Then came 1960 and Federico Fellini's celebrated *La Dolce Vita*, in which Anita Ekberg leapt into the fountain. She may have been the only treasure not fished out of it by either municipal coin collectors or neighborhood gangs.

Trevi is, indeed, a masterpiece of galloping baroque, with its gods and goddesses, tritons, rampaging horses, rocks, trees and cascades of water. Strangely cramped in its small piazza, it has undergone three centuries of building, relocating and rebuilding to achieve its current exuberance. The present site was chosen quite deliberately so that popes in their summer residence on the Quirinal hill could see it from their windows. An early and lasting legend promised that to sip its waters would ensure a return to Rome. How this got transmogrified into hurling coins—backward, over the left shoulder—nobody seems to know for sure.



Luigi Rossi lifts grate as he prepares to inspect one of the subterranean controls at the massive Fontanone.

Other papal gifts were the other great fountains: the Four Rivers of the Piazza Navona, the heroic Castor and Pollux of the Quirinal Palace, the somewhat sassy nymphs of the Piazza Repubblica and the beloved sunken boat, La Barcaccia, in the Piazza di Spagna. The favorite of many is the modest "Turtles" in Piazza Mattei, a 16th-century hymn to joy in the form of four youths who lift little bronze tortoises up to the fountain. My own favorite has always been the Triton, with his big, macho torso, who sits on a scallop shell in Piazza Barberini, shining in the sun and lofting a pure white stream of water from his conch shell into a deep blue Italian sky. Perhaps I love him so because he was the first fountain I saw, from my hotel, on my first visit to Rome in 1947.

When they were constructed, the great Renaissance fountains inspired both admiration and complaint. Emperors could impress soldiers and slaves to build their fountains; popes resorted to levying taxes. Nobody likes taxes, but Italians are more resentful than most. When Pope Urban VIII began restoration of the Trevi with a tax on wine in the early 1640s, one of Rome's famous "talking statues"—ancient stone figures to which citizens affixed notes criticizing the government—reported: "After a thousand taxes on wine, Urban now refreshes the Romans with plain water."

Even louder was the protest when, a few years later, a Pamphili pope, Innocent X, commissioned from Bernini the now beloved Four Rivers. To pay for it he levied a tax on bread, and within days there was attached to the fountain's central obelisk a note demanding "No more arches, no more water, give us bread, bread, bread."

Debunking a myth of the Four Rivers

No note today exists on this central fountain of the Piazza Navona, but another legend is repeated in half a dozen languages on any sunny Sunday. Bernini's masterpiece features the symbolic figures of the four great rivers of antiquity—the Nile, the Ganges, the Plate and the Danube—rivers that stood for their continents and the known world. The Nile is a reclining male with his face covered, and the Plate has one hand shielding his eyes. Guides will tell you the Nile is trying not to see the church across the street, and the Plate is raising his hand to protect himself from a collapsing facade. The false story is that Bernini, who designed the fountain, was jealous of Borromini, who designed the church. There certainly was some competition between them, but the truth is that the church was done two years after the fountain, and the covered face of Bernini's Nile is only an evocative message that no one had yet discovered the source of this wonderful river.

Modern Rome is served by eight aqueducts, four of them papal, two dating in part from the original ancient sources, two from the past three decades. Now, at last, modern Rome has an adequate water supply, but even so, the amount of water entering the sprawling city amounts to only half of the per capita flow of two millennia ago. Thus it is just as well that they sing opera in the ruins of the enormous Baths of Caracalla, and that modern heads of state don't go in for mock naval battles on artificial lakes.

Each of the aqueducts now, as centuries ago, feeds more than one fountain. They were designed, in a program as meticulous as that which originally gravity-fed them into the city, to be gravity-fed from one fountain to another. The sunken boat in the Piazza di Spagna, for example, benefactor of tourists with aching feet, was submerged because there was very little pressure left after the water had traversed half of Rome.

Water for the two fountains in St. Peter's Square comes from Lake Bracciano, and in spite of traps installed at the intake, an eel occasionally slips through, rides to Rome for an impromptu audience with the pope and clogs a fountain. When it is released, usually by the probing of firemen, it shoots high in the air

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A favorite rendezvous for Romans and tourists, the Spanish Steps provide backdrop to whimsical Barcaccia, one of fountains fed by the Vergine on its descent through city. Low water pressure dictated boat be awash.

and occasions a mad scramble among onlookers eager to take it home for lunch. The same fountains are much favored by tourists, who on warm windy days stand as near as possible to the wind-borne spray to enjoy the refreshing mist.

Many changes have followed with the centuries. Instead of letting the rush of water go unimpeded through the fountains and into the sewers, a 1938 Fascist-inspired wedding of the electric power agency and the hydraulic office brought some order into the system by converting part of the flow to generate electricity and installing pumping machinery. Nowadays the water in the major fountains is caught and recycled. A visit to the monumental Fontana Paolo, or "Fontanone" ("big fountain"), on the Janiculum hill is instructive. This 17th-century fountain dates from the reign of Pope Paul V, who decreed that Emperor Trajan's A.D. 109 aqueduct be restored and increased to bring water to the hill and a crowded slum quarter below. Workmen were hired and paid, but then an edict instructed them to provide their own building materials—at which point, of course, they started with fine Italian hand to demolish the old aqueduct to get cheap materials for the new. Only 15 days after the first edict came the second, condemning the workmen for destroying the old structure.

The Fontanone is the *castellum* of its particular aqueduct. It is closed and drained for cleaning once a week by experts from the water authority, frequently joined by volunteers who love fountains as the Lambertis love aqueducts. On a spring morning I went with the workmen. First they climbed behind the fountain and unlocked a heavy door. This exposed a stone collecting tank and the sound of rushing water. Then they lifted a metal lid and inserted a giant key, like that used in a railroad-track switch. It took two men and four hands to turn the key slowly, lowering a metal dam that shut off the flow of water. This part is relatively modern, they explained, but down below—below is Trajan's work. More keys, another opened door and stone steps leading down into total blackness. Nobody, of course, had thought to bring a flashlight. Never mind. We went slowly down, and the sound of water got louder. Here, in the dark, was a row of ancient stone tanks, nine of them, each with a lead pipe in the bottom. This was the distribution point of Trajan's

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Detail of 19th-century "Neptune" fountain in the Piazza Navona shows an octopus curling around god's thigh, while a tiny putto grasps a dolphin.

water; it rushed into the collecting tank above, then poured into the tanks below and was directed from there to nine other points in the city. There were no taps. How could anyone stop the water if need be? Each pipe had an accompanying, carefully carved plug that looked a bit like a policeman's billy and could be stuck into the pipe.

They don't use this system anymore because now, once the fountain is cleaned, the same two men must laboriously maneuver the same four-handed key to raise the metal dam and let the water back into the collecting tank. Pumps will activate automatically when the tank is full, to send the water back up and let it fall again; will regulate the pressure so it doesn't burst the pipes; and will send appropriate amounts of water down below the hilltop to various outlets.

Nowadays the superintendents of both the aqueducts and the fountains are women: "Men leave the culture to us and keep finance for themselves," they say wryly, but they are proud to be keepers of the ancient glories. The present "fountain lady," Luisa Cardilli Aleisi, has 159 in her care, including all the oldest and most famous ones. Though minimal compared with the 1,200 or so of long, long ago, they are quite enough to keep her in a state of near hair-pulling agitation. If it isn't automobiles crashing into protective chains, it is dog owners shampooing their pets or air pollution and pigeon droppings eating away the stone of the sculptures and basins.

During an on-and-off, 30-year residency in or near Rome, I think I have seen all the fountains—and then I take a walk. Within less than a mile, one totally new to me suddenly jumps out of a wall or a piazza or an odd corner and spits its water at me as if offended that I had never noticed it.

I beg its pardon and move on, only to be stopped by the most ubiquitous of all, the low, fire-hydrant-like street fountain that exists at curbside all over Rome. About these, Luisa Aleisi does not have to worry. No show here, just instant and comfortable utility. The water streams day and night, just as it did in olden times. It is drinkable, and there is a hole in the top of the downspout that will direct a jet upward if you plug the outlet of the downspout with a finger. Innocent foreigners, eager to stop the "waste," often try to turn it off, but there is no way.

This modest little fountain is logical heir to the waters of yore—a boon to the small boy with a big thirst or dirty feet, a savior to the flower seller on the corner, an enticement to the vegetable buyer next door, a pleasant balm to the ear of the passer-by, and a reminder of the bounty of the earth. And after the water has done all that, it gurgles down into those old sewers to flush out the city, just as it did back when it all began.

The baroque theatricality of Nicola Salvi's 18th-century Trevi fountain has inspired legend and song.

By Helen Dudar

'Griot New York' sets the city's rhythm to dance

This collaboration of choreographer Garth Fagan, musician Wynton Marsalis and sculptor Martin Puryear crackles with fiery energy

Nothing in the rule books guarantees that a collaboration by three gifted men will produce a memorable work of theater art. The result could be disastrous. Or embarrassing. A dismal clutter of ill-matched talents. Worse yet, it could turn out to be merely promising. How encouraging, then, to know that since late last year, the Garth Fagan Dance, a small, impeccably trained company based in Rochester, New York, has crisscrossed an ocean and a couple of continents to perform *Griot New York*—the sum of a union of three commanding talents—before audiences whose responses are seldom less than adoring.

Griot is largely the creation of Garth Fagan, an ebullient, stubborn, demanding man who assembled a dance company 21 years ago with little more to sustain the enterprise than abundant self-confidence and a blizzard of ideas. To make the music for the piece, he enlisted Wynton Marsalis, virtuoso of the jazz and classical trumpet, a friend and admirer for eight years. For the sets, he ventured into untested territory. The traditional choice might have been an artist whose images are set down on canvas, but Fagan dislikes painted backdrops. So he invited sculptor Martin Puryear to design a signature piece for each of the eight segments of a new evening-length work which, at the time of the invitation, consisted of a title, scraps of amorphous imagery and a Garth Fagan poem.

The three are African-Americans, a detail that is, in equal parts, pertinent and irrelevant. What they share has perhaps less to do with skin color than with the immeasurable benefits of strong, family-centered origins. Fagan, 52, grew up on the island of Jamaica (where his father was the chief education officer), in a household that accorded equal homage to Johannes Brahms and Duke Ellington. Marsalis, 30, is the son of the great New Orleans jazz pianist and teacher Ellis Marsalis. Puryear, who is also 52, was one of seven children reared in Washington, D.C., where his father was a postal-clerk supervisor and his mother a schoolteacher.

Late one night last December, after one of the premiere performances of *Griot* at the Brooklyn Academy

At his studio in Rochester, New York, Garth Fagan tries out dance moves; *Griot*, which he choreographed, is being performed across the country by his troupe.

of Music (BAM), in New York, Fagan and Marsalis stood below the stage and talked to the audience about the creation of the piece. The first enthusiastic newspaper reviews had appeared that morning, but Fagan was uncharacteristically salty about the tenor of one of them: "a tired piece of journalism, in which everything was linked to black black black." As he would observe on another occasion, while many of us grow up shaped by the traditions of a single racial or ethnic heritage, few children of the New World reach maturity untouched by the rich multicultural strains of their countries.

What he is pleased to call the "Fagan technique" is a prime example of the process: it embraces most of the dance idioms of the age. At the urging of his parents, Fagan spent four years studying psychology at Wayne State University in Detroit, but from the days of his adolescence he managed to feed an unappeasable appetite for dance. As a teenage performer with the Jamaica National Dance Company and as an adult student who haunted the New York classes of some seminal figures of our time, he learned and astutely borrowed from almost everybody.

His work uses the fluidity and polyrhythms of African-Caribbean dance seen in the works of Pearl Primus; the speed and height of ballet; the great range of modern into-the-floor styles that are the hallmarks of Martha Graham, José Limón and Alvin Ailey. Collaterally, even the unstudied virile grace of American basketball stars provided useful instruction.

He is not the first or only multiculturalist among dance innovators, but success in that vein always depends, as Fagan puts it, on "making a seamless whole of all of it." It has taken the better part of 21 years—and *Griot* is as seamless as a dance invention gets. Since its premiere, the company has performed the piece in Vienna, Houston, Topeka, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and at Jacob's Pillow in Lee, Massachusetts. From September 22 to October 4, excerpts of *Griot* will be performed at the Joyce Theater in New York City. Later it will be performed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (November 19-21); the University of Arizona

Photographs by Jonathan Atkin

As seamless as a dance invention gets

(February 13, 1993); the University of California at Berkeley (February 19-20) and the University of Minnesota (May 12).

A *griot* is a figure out of West African culture, a storyteller, the keeper of tribal history. Fagan, a widely traveled man, was lucky enough to be present as a few of them spun their tales. These are told without attention to the logic of sequence, in a nonlinear narrative style that rummages through time in ways that Fagan finds both intellectually and emotionally satisfying.

Fagan's *Griot* was born sometime in 1990 in the comforting surround of his first country. Rochester has been home since 1970, when Fagan arrived to become a professor of dance at the State University of New York in nearby Brockport. He had left behind in Detroit an earlier dance company and now launched another, a little pickup outfit at first self-consciously named "Bottom of the Bucket But . . ." Still, after all this time, Jamaica is both a haven and the place that fires his imagination, "a crossroads of old and new, a mixture of Caribbean and European, a contrast of enormous wealth and outrageous poverty."

He had a commission from BAM to create a new dance work, a quite modest grant but one theoretically serious enough to be shared for the first time with both a composer and a set designer. It came together when other sponsors jumped in: the Vienna Festival-Tanz '92, the Houston International Festival, the University of the Arts (Philadelphia/Festival Mythos) and the University of Kansas Concert Series. So Fagan sat on the beach at Ocho Rios and imagined celebrating Manhattan—the city in all its beauty and squalor, the magical urban landscape of his 20s, when he was finding his way around museums and concert halls and jazz clubs and sampling every dance innovator's genius.

Having roughly plotted the structure of a new dance, Fagan came home from Jamaica and talked to Wynton Marsalis about composing the music. The two men have been friends since 1985 when Marsalis and his musicians played an engagement in Rochester. After the concert, Fagan was part of a backstage crowd introduced to Marsalis; a couple of evenings later, driving to his studio to rehearse his company, he spotted a disconsolate-looking Marsalis walking alone down the street. It was a cold night. Marsalis was depressed, in pain over the defection of his brother, Branford, the saxophonist, who had lately left the band. Fagan braked and called out, "Hey Wynton, you don't look good. What's going on? Get in the car." Marsalis couldn't remember having met him but accepted a ride.

"We drove to a place that looked like a gym," Marsalis later related. "I thought maybe we were going to play basketball. But no, the place was full of dancers. He introduced me and said, 'This man is one of the greatest musicians in America.' I looked at him and said, 'Damn!' The dancers did a concert just for me. I said, 'Man, people can actually do this?'" A friendship was born.

To convey the emotional content of *Griot*, Fagan wrote a poem, a brisk little jazz-inflected piece spilling out key words and phrases. Marsalis carried it to Harlem and sat down to talk about it with Albert Murray, the distinguished jazz scholar and novelist, another old friend and a mentor. "Al told me the poem was about three things. It was about the city, the cityscape. Secondly, it was about the people who come into the city. Third, it was about what people do in the city."

Months would go by before Fagan would hear or see a bar of Marsalis music. With the best intentions in the world, Marsalis had agreed to the collaboration, but, as always, the Wynton Marsalis Septet had a full schedule of performances all over the world, in addition to its leader's teaching chores and other professional obligations.

The problem of finding a set designer was solved with the help of Fagan's good friend Liz Thompson, then director of the BAM Next Wave Festival. She proposed Martin Puryear; at the mention of the name, she says, "all the lights went on." Fagan had encountered Puryear's sculpture in an exhibition at a Boston museum show only two years before and was intoxicated by it. Puryear works mostly in wood, mostly by hand, creating objects that are simultaneously familiar and mysterious, in shapes at once primal and sophisticated.

Thompson knew him, and when the Fagan company came to the Joyce Theater in New York for an engagement in November 1990, she invited the artist to a performance and brought him backstage after the curtain. Later, the two men went down the street for a

The author, a frequent contributor to these pages, wrote about the Seattle Art Museum in April 1992.

In "The Disenfranchised," Fagan dancer Norwood Pennewell confronts a stairway that leads to nowhere.

Natalie Rogers solos in front of Puryear's giant hoe in "Bayou Baroque," a dance that gives form to grief.

Underneath a looming head by Martin Puryear (he designed all the sets for *Griot*), Fagan troupe members perform "City Court Dance." It's an impersonal piece, says Fagan: "These people are saying, 'I'm so cool.'"

Jazz musician Wynton Marsalis composed the music for *Griot*. His septet was on a world tour while the dance was in the works, so he played new sections to Fagan over the phone from stops along his route.

late restaurant supper. "We found we were speaking the same language," Fagan recalls. "Then I sent him the poem, told him what I wanted. I explained each segment only by the feel, the mood. I don't like things too literal, which I get criticized for."

Puryear agreed to design the costumes, as well as the stage pieces, but the demands of a looming museum show would compel him to abandon the dancers' garb. Eventually, big sheets of drawings for the set designs arrived—crude sketches, Puryear called them, but Fagan was entranced. Puryear's brother, Michael, a cabinetmaker in Brooklyn, crafted the pieces that were made out of wood.

Puryear had imagined a series of common objects on a scale that transformed them into monuments: the ballooned back of an immense head suspended from the rafters, which many observers took to be an inverted tribal water jug ("A jughead, why not?" Fagan cheerfully commented); a giant hoe that bespoke the possibilities of spring and newly tilled earth; a narrow staircase reaching high and far toward nothingness; a great foam rubber chain, which some critics took to be an allusion to slavery, but which was intended to be far more ambiguous. The original chain design—it turned out to be too difficult to execute—called for hexagonal links that would have suggested jewelry as well as bondage.

While he waited for the Marsalis contribution, Fagan set to work on his new dance, using whatever music was at hand. Summer went by and still no music from his composer. One day in September, he called Marsalis in Mexico City, where the septet was playing after a tour of South America. The premiere was only three months away—when would he hear music? From that moment, wherever he was, Marsalis would finish a concert and sit up into the early morning hours composing for *Griot*. Having completed a section, he would usually awaken Fagan with a call—from Paris, London, Zurich, Hamburg—to demonstrate the piece on horn and piano. Then, if it suited, the septet would record it on tape to be sent off to Rochester. Once he got started, Marsalis couldn't stop; he was still composing a week before the premiere. And he ended up with 3,000 bars of music, 90 more minutes than Fagan could use.

In one case, Fagan put aside a glorious gospel piece intended for the finale. "I said, 'Never, no, nix.'" The problem wasn't with the piece itself (he plans to use it in another production) but with using the piece to end *Griot*: he refused to appear to be emulating Alvin Ailey's memorable gospel finale for *Revelations*. "Until I have something fresh, I will not do it. I won't touch it." And he rejected a shuffle, a crafty Marsalis version of the kind of jazz dance that turns up in tired lounge acts and high school pageants. "Wynton's shuffle is wonderful, like no other shuffle you've ever heard, but I hate shuffle. I hate shuffle. Everybody who thinks they're doing jazz is doing shuffle. I can't go back there."

In October, Marsalis came to see how well the music matched the choreography. When two Fagan dancers sinuously moved through a tender four-and-a-half-minute duet entitled "Spring Yaounde," Marsalis found himself in tears. The piece wears the name of

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Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, a lush, green, dewy landscape. It is quite breathtaking, a fertility dance of matchless elegance and sensuality, in which intertwining male and female, both naked to the waist, seem to metamorphose from insects to animals to humans. Marsalis decided that his music fell short of the aspirations of the sequence and sat down in the studio—one hand holding his trumpet, the other on the piano—to create something more romantic. The company, which took a dinner break while he worked, came back just as he finished, and the two dancers performed their duet to the new music. It was surely a paradigmatic moment in jazz.

Puryear communicated with Fagan largely by mail. He came to Rochester in November to see the dance and was at the dress rehearsal in Brooklyn the following month. "A generous gentleman," Fagan calls him. Among other generosities: he did not object to several changes Fagan made. In one sequence, the tall, skinny length of staircase was laid across the stage, instead of climbing skyward. And then a nine-foot length of orange-colored, inflated "human lips," designed for the eighth and final sequence, "High Rise Riff," proved to be unsuitable and was discarded altogether. On the other hand, Fagan was so smitten with Puryear's elegant hoe that he altered the choreography to work the piece into the dance more effectively.

Of the three men who applied their talents to *Griot*, Puryear seemed to harbor a lingering, albeit friendly, skepticism about this marriage of talents. At the dress rehearsal in Brooklyn he told a radio interviewer: "I'm not so sure it's a collaboration or it's just three people working in some ways side by side, and they end up at the same place."

At 9 o'clock on a weekday evening, a raw winter night in Rochester, the 15 members of the Garth Fagan company have assembled in their work space for a rehearsal of *Griot*. Performances in Kansas are looming, and Fagan wants them picture-perfect. That day, without Fagan, the dancers have already moved through their usual two-hour work sessions, a morning and a late-afternoon class, each conducted partly in silence, with almost monastic focus. There are 15 of them, in a variety of sizes and shapes and skin colors, ranging in age from 20 to 47, elegantly muscled, and trained to a virtuosity that is all the more beguiling for a notable absence of flash. "My beautiful instruments," Fagan calls them. They return the appreciation. Many of them have never danced with any other group. Natalie Rogers has. She is an alumna of several companies and one of Fagan's stellar figures, and when she is asked to describe the differences between Fagan Dance and other companies, she replies in the most casual tone, "Oh, Garth is a genius."

Rochester's genius is a teddy bear of a man who wears his hair in a pony tail and is partial to bold jewelry. By reputation, he was a wonder to behold onstage, but his own dancing was sacrificed to the demands of an infant company and the university post. Still, Norwood Pennewell, his assistant and a brilliant dancer, notes that when Fagan rises to demonstrate a movement, "he still has this rock-solid center and great speed, and what's even more important than the movement he is showing us, incredible focus."

Working conditions have improved for the company since Marsalis saw them perform in a shabby old gym. They now occupy a generous space that was once headquarters for a Knights of Columbus lodge; the amenities include a suite of offices and a handsome former ballroom still embellished with the stained-glass windows of its previous tenant. The strains on Fagan have also eased as he has assembled corporate

In "High Rise Riff," the final dance in *Griot*, Norwood Pennewell, known for his uncanny ability to "hang" in the air, performs a series of signature Fagan jumps.

and local and national foundation support. "The first 12 years of the company, I did it all myself; I was administrator, choreographer, teacher, lighting designer." Now, he has a small staff of experts who keep backstage operations running smoothly.

Fagan sits at a small table. In front of him are the tape decks with Marsalis' music, and at his side, an assistant prepared to take notes of his muttered comments. Rehearsal begins with the first segment, "City Court Dance," a mocking view of big-city courting rituals. "That's a cold, impersonal duet," he murmurs. "It's Manhattan. It's 42d Street. They stalk each other. Those people are saying, 'I'm so cool. I'm wearing these designer duds.' "

Natalie Rogers, sculpture in motion, next appears for "Bayou Baroque." "If you look carefully," Fagan says, "you will see the shapes of grief. But you don't see grief, itself. She's not a victim. That's important."

The "Spring Yaounde" love duet, as astonishing as ever, is followed by "Sand Painting." "My homage to Alvin Ailey, may he rest in peace. A generous and beautiful man and very supportive of me." A moment later, Fagan comments gently, "You seldom see black America in a tender moment like this." The entire company is onstage for "The Disenfranchised," the darkest episode in Fagan's celebration of city, a tormented piece that evokes every homeless, stricken, dying victim of modern urban life. "Some nights I can't look at it," its creator says. "It breaks me up." The final three high-spirited segments banish the grimness. They are spiced with Fagan's sly gift for satire and witty sendups of outsider notions of "real" African-American and Hispanic dance movement. The last of them, "High Rise Riff," is a wicked jab at city swells.

Fagan calculates that *Griot* is the 50th work he has choreographed for the company in its 21 years. Arguably, it is the most successful of all his dances. But it seems he wants more than applause. The demands of his university post and the unending needs of the company erode the hours that could be applied to creative enterprise. Fagan's idea of luxury turns out to be the gift of time. After all these years, he knows very well what audiences and critics are likely to love and praise. All he yearns for now are abundant days and nights in which to experiment, to fail. More time, as Fagan puts it, "to go out and push that dance to the limit."

A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH.

THE HARDEST WORK IS TO DO NOTHING.

ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.

ONE GOOD HEAD IS BETTER THAN A HUNDRED STRONG HANDS.

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

THERE WILL BE SLEEPING ENOUGH IN THE GRAVE.

By Richard Wolkomir

A proverb each day keeps this scholar at play

Ranging through history and across cultures, the University of Vermont's Wolfgang Mieder mines maxims for their wit and wisdom

Wolfgang Mieder, the world's top proverb expert, is smitten with "Different strokes for different folks." It heads his all-time personal proverb hit parade because it is so American. "It doesn't tell you what to do!" he says.

Not being told what to do drew Mieder to the United States as a teenager. Ever since emigrating here from Germany at age 16, he has devoted himself to leaving no proverbial stone unturned. Besides teaching about proverbs at the University of Vermont, where he chairs the Department of German and Russian, he has published more than 50 books (so far) on his favorite subject, including the massive new Oxford University Press *Dictionary of American Proverbs.* He edits *Proverbium,* the annual compendium of scholarly articles on proverbs, and churns out barrages of proverb studies.

"Different strokes for different folks," for instance, got his attention in 1968, when it hit the big time in the song "Everyday People," by Sly and the Family Stone. Mieder later found its parallel in a 1732 English proverb, "Different sores must have different salves," but he concluded that the "sores" proverb never made it in the United States, probably because "not many people now know what salves are anymore." He spotted a version of "different strokes" in an African-American folklore dissertation. Then he worked his way through folklore archives at the University of California at Berkeley, and pondered studies of inner-city and black slang. Finally he traced "different strokes" to Southern blacks in the 1950s. It even appeared in a series of 1970s Volkswagen ads: "Different Volks for Different Folks." Another permutation was the television sitcom *Diff'rent Strokes.*

Usually, Mieder's proverb probes go further back. Many "American" proverbs originated in ancient Greece and Rome and in medieval Europe, spreading from country to country in Latin texts. For example, "Big fish eat little fish" goes back nearly 3,000 years, to the Greek poet Hesiod, in the eighth century B.C. Mieder suspects it originated in Sumer, which produced the first proverb collections—on cuneiform tablets.

Mieder also monitors ongoing proverb research, from proverb-based schizophrenia tests to efforts to reduce the world's millions of proverbs to just a few linguistic types. And he is working out America's "proverbial minimum," a list of proverbs you must know to be able to chug along in the society.

Colleagues accuse Mieder of workaholism. "The hardest work is to do nothing," he counters in his Schleswig-Holstein accent. "An idle man is the devil's playfellow," he says. "The sleepy fox catches no chickens! Hard work never hurt anybody! He that rises late must trot all day!" He works until midnight and rises with the robins. Vacations? He looks appalled. A doctor once cured Mieder's migraine headaches by telling him, "In your case, don't even *try* taking it easy."

Mieder follows the doctor's orders. He is slight, under 5 foot 5, with a gingery mustache and the air of a hummingbird who drank too much coffee. Even sitting at his computer he seems to dart about, the result of mental turbocharging.

New mutants of old proverbs

His office in his Vermont hillside home contains the world's most extensive private proverb library, 5,000 books, dissertations, monographs and articles. It also houses an 8,000-slide archive of proverbs in art, advertising and everything else, including dish towels.

"You name it," says Mieder. "You could ask me, 'Are there any ads by the Ford Motor Company that use proverbs?' And I could look in the archive and say, 'Yes—"One Drive is Worth A Thousand Words,"' which was for the 1984 T-bird." That slogan is a mutant version of "One picture is worth a thousand words." And Mieder can tell you the origins of that proverb, too. Its structure, he says, is one of the universal types: "One of something is worth vast numbers of something else." He can spin off examples, such as "One good head is better than a hundred strong hands" (English), "A friend is better than a thousand silver pieces" (Greek), "A moment is worth a thousand gold pieces" (Korean), "A single penny fairly got is worth a thousand that are not" (German), and "Silence is worth a thousand pieces of silver" (Burmese).

Photograph by Richard Howard

Illustrations by John Huehnergarth

Many proverbs are rooted in context: reference to a hen's egg-producing theatrics might well baffle a city kid.

The structure of "One picture is worth a thousand words" may derive from a familiar type, but the actual proverb was dreamed up in 1921 by Fred R. Barnard of the Street Railways Advertising Company. He used it in a piece he wrote for the advertising journal *Printer's Ink*, advocating pictures in advertisements.

"One picture" hit on something about how the mind works—at least, the American mind in the nascent media age—and became part of the national psychic genome. That is one way to look at proverbs: as bits of mental DNA passed on from generation to generation. Some persist, others mutate and evolve. Some disappear. But proverbs are slippery things, and defining them precisely has eluded proverb scholars, or paroemiologists.

"Proverbs are crystallized bits of wisdom," says Mieder, adding that they average seven words, tend to have several levels of meaning and apply to various situations. That is why they are not necessarily true. If "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," why do we say "Out of sight, out of mind"? And if "He who hesitates is lost," how come you have to "Look before you leap"? Mix and match, says Mieder. "We pick the proverb that fits the situation." He has his own favorite definition: "A proverb is a concise statement of an *apparent* truth that has currency."

Besides currency, a proverb has bite, and that can be dangerous. Poetic devices like rhyme and ellipsis, the omission of unneeded words, make proverbs condensed and powerful. They *sound* true. But they are really prepackaged thoughts, and—humans being what we are—those thoughts are not always healthy.

"Thousands of proverbs are slurs," says Mieder. For example, Europe has many anti-Semitic proverbs. "Hitler exploited proverbs, and twisted them," Mieder says, adding that one of his most touching moments came after he discussed the Nazi misuse of proverbs at a meeting of the American Folklore Society. An auditorium full of people gave him a standing ovation. He has just finished writing a paper on "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," which he has traced to Gen. Philip Sheridan, in January 1869, at Fort Cobb in Indian Territory. "Right after the Civil War, all those troops had nothing better to do than to hunt down Indians in the name of Manifest Destiny," he says. "It's terrible invective, one of the sadder American proverbs."

Meanwhile, thousands of proverbs are about women, and most of them are misogynistic. "Women are as wavering as the wind," Mieder recites. "A woman is the weaker vessel"; "A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail." On the other hand, on Mieder's office wall at the university hangs a hand-lettered proverb: "Before you meet the handsome prince, you really have to kiss a lot of Toads." It is an example of the modern "anti-proverb"—an old-fashioned proverb given a twist—a phenomenon that fascinates Mieder. "A woman's place is in the House . . . and the Senate!" he says, reciting another favorite. Or "A man's home is his castle; let him clean it." In the media age, we like our proverbs ironic, with attitude.

Recently, Mieder gave a guest lecture on anti-proverbs at Smith College, in Massachusetts. His audience was a roomful of distinguished professors. He arrived at this gathering with a special mission: to blow the lid off Ben Franklin. Most of us think Franklin was a big-time coiner of proverbs. But of the 1,044 proverbs in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, Mieder said, only a smattering were Franklin's own. "Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes it" was one. "There will be sleeping enough in the grave" was another. A good many of the rest, Franklin snitched.

Mieder cited "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" from *Poor Richard's* of 1735. It must have been one of Franklin's favorites because he called for it to be inscribed on copper coins. "But

Familiar sayings may have sources in antiquity. "Big fish eat little fish" likely debuted on cuneiform tablets.

a variant of 'Early to bed, early to rise' was recorded in English for the first time in 1496, which was 210 years before Franklin was born," Mieder said.

Ben did make an attempt to come clean. In his preface to *Poor Richard's* of 1758, he admitted that when people quoted "his" proverbs, his vanity was "wonderfully delighted." But, he confessed, "I was conscious that not a tenth part of the wisdom was my own." The proverbs, he acknowledged, were "the gleanings that I made

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"The lazy fox catches no chickens" is a particular favorite of Mieder's; he considers this maxim (which was also championed by proverb maven Ben Franklin) a pat on the back to those of workaholic bent.

of the sense of all ages and nations."

By now, Mieder was darting about the room in full Energizer rabbit mode, showing how "Early to bed" had quickly burrowed into the American psyche. It even appeared in *Moby-Dick*, where Herman Melville blended it with "The early bird catches the worm," another favorite proverb, to describe a harpooner: "Generally he's an early bird—airley to bed and airley to rise—yes, he's the bird that catches the worm." But "Early to bed" piqued Mark Twain, who said rising early made him look "blue, and pulpy, and swelled, like a drowned man." Twain charged that Franklin's maxim was "full of animosity toward boys." "And that boy," he added, "is hounded to death and robbed of his natural rest."

Groucho Marx also objected to the proverb, on the grounds that wealthy people he knew "will fire the help if they are disturbed before 3 in the afternoon." And James Thurber noted that "Early to rise and early to bed makes a male healthy and wealthy and dead."

"Proverb literacy" is down, Mieder said. More and more young people know fewer and fewer of the old ones, which is too bad because proverbs are part of the country's social glue. On the other hand, he said, new proverbs spring up, like the computer age's "Garbage in, garbage out." And popular music serves as a kind of proverb bank. "There was Bob Dylan's 'Like a Rolling Stone,' " Mieder enthusiastically told the distinguished professors. "And Cher did 'Apples Don't Fall Far From the Tree.' "

Vermont-based Richard Wolkomir favors such sage advice as "Don't whistle 'til you're out of the woods."

The "Apples" proverb came to this country from Germany, as did Mieder, on his own. His father was the purchasing agent for the old Hanseatic port of Lübeck; his mother, a secretary for the city. As a high school student in the 1950s, Mieder was an enthusiastic member of the rowing team—"I still row in my dry dock upstairs," he says. But he was no scholar: "I felt stifled in the German schools of that time." He had no plans for college, but he wanted to be a forest ranger. His other enthusiasm was America.

"America meant freedom, liberation from traditional authority, a certain rebellion," Mieder says. Nights, after he was supposed to be asleep, young Wolfgang would hide under the covers with a flashlight, reading forbidden American comic books while listening on his headset to Radio Luxembourg, the "Station of the Stars." "I liked Harry Belafonte—'Banana Boat' was really good—and I was a big fan of the Everly Brothers and especially Buddy Holly." He went on to be a Beatles fan and a "real Bob Dylan fan" and also a fan of Ray Charles, the Supremes . . .

He was crazy about American cars, too, especially the kind with big tailfins, or sporty jobs. "Once in a while you'd see a Corvette, or maybe a Thunderbird," he recalls.

When Mieder was 16, he learned that his poor vision disqualified him as a forest ranger. Impulsively, he wrote to a Detroit newspaper photographer he had once met when the journalist had visited relatives in Germany. Would it be possible, he asked, to put a notice in the paper asking if anyone would temporarily take in "a little German boy"? Not long after, he received a letter saying that 12 families were lined up and school began in two weeks. "I hadn't told my parents that I'd written—that was my little surprise," he says.

Amazingly, his parents said he could go for a year. But his father wrote out a contract, which they both signed, requiring Wolfgang to write a letter every Sunday. And shortly afterward, in August of 1960, the little German boy boarded a Manhattan-bound liner crammed with hundreds of U.S. college students sailing home from a sum-

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mer in Europe. Mieder became the ship's pet.

"I was the youngest on the boat, in my lederhosen," he says. "I learned all the colloquial English you can dream of, including curses, and I was drinking Heineken beer. By the time we saw the Statue of Liberty, which was one of my life's most moving moments, I was an educated young man!"

A teacher he'd met on the ship helped him navigate the honking streets to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. The bus was full, so he had to wait six hours for the next one, unable to let his Detroit hosts know he was delayed—"I didn't know how to make a telephone call." Later, when the bus made a rest stop, he didn't know how to work the soda machine.

As Mieder had expected, Detroit was heaven. First he stayed with a 26-year-old fireman and his wife. "The three of us would drive in their white 1959 Chevrolet—with the *big* fins—to the drive-in, and we'd sit in that huge car munching popcorn and watching John Wayne," says Mieder.

He was in the capital of Motown music and cars. "I'd go to car dealers and collect those booklets, showing those beautiful cars, and I'd send them to my father, who didn't have a car," he says. In the U.S. high schools, Mieder flowered. Teachers amazed him by taking an interest. "I suddenly realized I wasn't so stupid after all!" He shot to the head of his class and even quit track because it interfered with his studies.

Meanwhile, he moved in with another family. They proved equally hospitable, but they did point out that "'Wolfgang' just doesn't make it as an American name." He was offered three choices by his host family: Joe, Leo or Pete. Mieder chose Pete. "I began signing my letters to my family 'Pete.'" After a while, the weekly letters coming to him from Lübeck began, "Dear Pete."

Pete wrote home to ask if he could stay one more year. On his birthday, he received a telegram: "*Du darfst bleiben*," "You may stay."

Everyday dilemmas—such as the perils of seeking a suitable match—inspire the creation of spunky new watchwords.

Do not consult proverbs in search of absolutes: contradictory advice seems to come with folk-wisdom territory.

As it turned out, he was to stay far beyond another year. He went to live with a Ford executive who had teenage children. "All of my intellectual interests really blossomed in that family," he says. His record was so exceptional that he won a scholarship to Olivet College, in Michigan, where he earned straight A's. He planned to be a chemist but decided that, as a scientist, he was unoriginal. "Mainly I had *Sitzfleisch*, which means 'sitting meat,' or endurance for hard work," he explains. He toyed with majoring in French, then opted for German—and became "Wolfgang" again.

As Olivet's top graduate, he went on to the University of Michigan. Next he worked his way through the PhD program at Michigan State as a teaching assistant. There he met his future wife, Barbara, also earning a doctorate in German. And, in a seminar on German folklore, Mieder discovered proverbs.

"It just kind of clicked with me," he says. "How they work, how they're constructed, their history, and how they're everywhere—from Carl Sandburg's poetry to art, psychology, politics, and advertisements for cars and cameras." Proverbs, he believes, show us something about how we think. "My interest in proverbs actually is a fascination with how we are ruled by traditional attitudes, and anti-proverbs show how we try to break out."

By studying proverbs, he found, he had discovered a window on any number of human societies. In some African tribes, for instance, lawsuits are decided in terms of proverb battles, the winner being the litigant judged to produce the most apt proverbs.

In our own society, people's sanity or IQ may be determined by how they explain proverbs. Such proverb tests have been used since the early 1900s, in the belief that people with certain mental disorders, particularly schizophrenia, cannot comprehend a proverb's abstract meanings. Similarly, some psychologists believe the ability to understand proverb abstrac-

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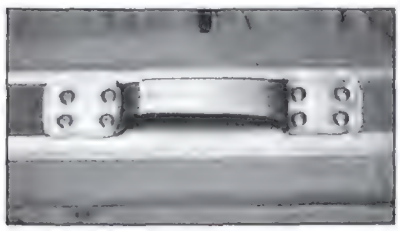

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tions is a measure of intelligence.

But folklorists like Mieder, backed by some recent studies, question the value of proverbs for psychological testing. They note that proverbs' meanings depend on the situations in which they are used. And many proverbs do not fit our changed society. A city youth who has never met a Rhode Island Red might have trouble deciphering "Never cackle unless you lay." Nationality also can affect interpretations. The Scots, for instance, tend to read "A rolling stone gathers no moss" as extolling the virtues of action as opposed to the more sedentary life. The English, however, tend to equate it with the beautiful growth of moss on a stone in a stream, a metaphor for tradition and stability.

These examples suggest that proverbs reveal "national character." But paroemiologists following that road have hit a dead end. "I could put together a bunch of proverbs that show Americans are materialistic, and I could put together another collection showing that Americans really value friendship and love," says Mieder. "If I know the 300 most common American proverbs, the ones we really use, then *maybe* I can say something."

In fact, that is one of Mieder's current projects, although aimed at a different goal than determining national character. The idea of establishing a country's "proverbial minimum" began in Russia in the 1970s, when scholars developed a questionnaire and identified about 300 proverbs that every Russian knows. In the former Soviet Union, people of many nationalities often found themselves struggling to learn Russian, a proverb-rich language, and mastering the proverbial minimum was vital. Now efforts are under way to establish proverbial minimums for other nations, too.

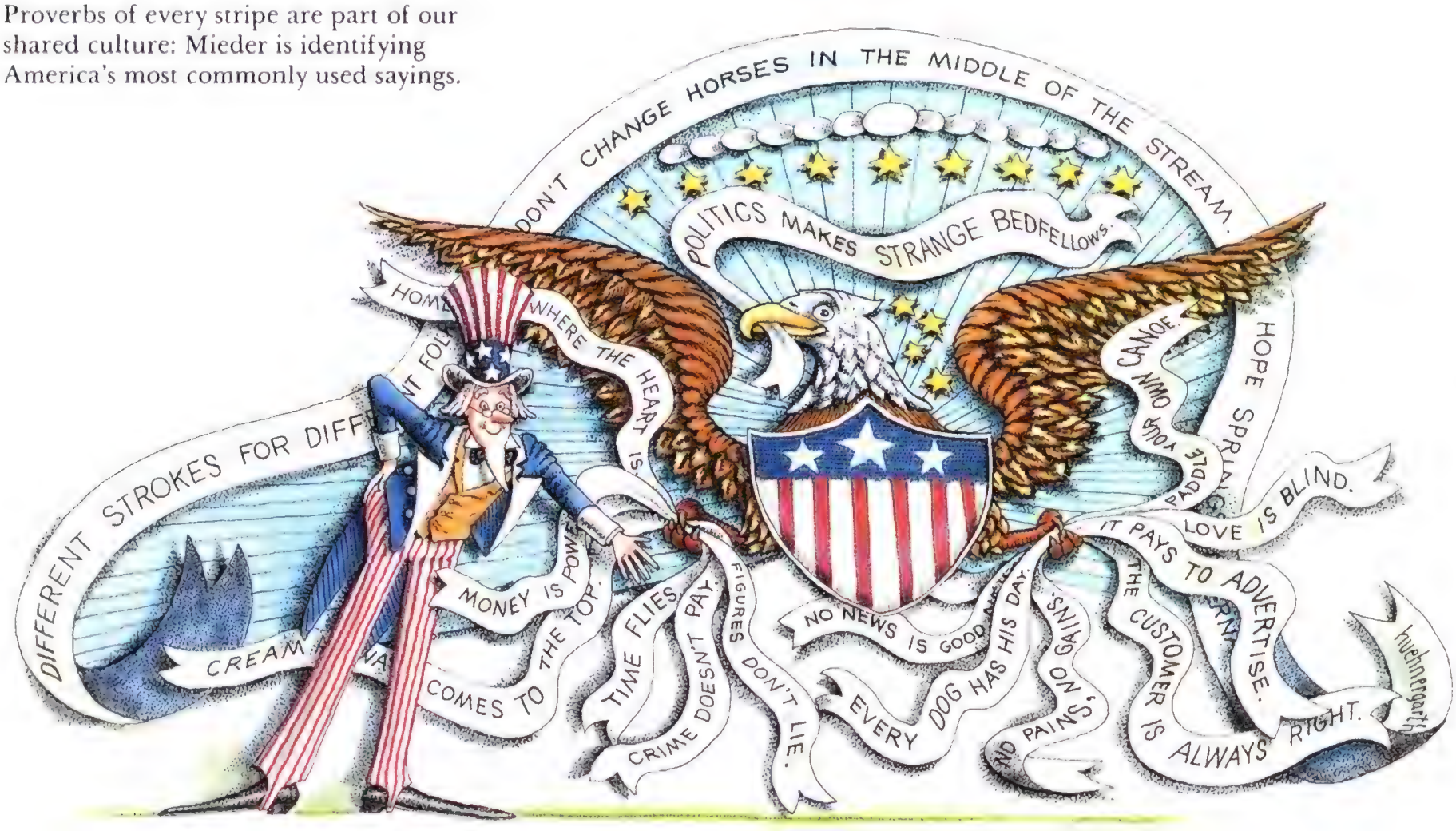
Mieder is pushing the project in the United States: "I've already done statistical analyses, figuring out which proverbs are particularly frequent in 20th-century U.S. writing." Some proverbs that show up often are: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," "The early bird catches the worm," "Chickens come home to roost," "Charity begins at home," "Easy come, easy go" and "Business before pleasure." Mieder cautions, however, "we would have to distribute about 10,000 questionnaires around the United States to see what proverbs people actually use." Establishing a U.S. proverbial minimum will ease the path for immigrants learning English, he adds.

Meanwhile, linguists are taking a whack at the world's millions of extant proverbs, trying to reduce them to a small number of basic structures. On one level, they reduce proverbs to simple formulas, like "Where there's X, there's Y." But on a deeper level, where they use symbolic logic, their results are pages full of pluses, minuses, equal signs and does-not-equal signs.

"I'm not in the pure linguist school because it's too dry for me," says Mieder. "My specialty is historical, interdisciplinary and comparative studies—my problem is I like it all!"

To each his own. Or, as that quintessentially American proverb puts it: "Different strokes for different folks!"

Proverbs of every stripe are part of our shared culture: Mieder is identifying America's most commonly used sayings.



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By Timothy Foote

A new film about fly fishing—and much, much more

Robert Redford's version of A River Runs Through It *is about to plunge audiences into the life and works of Norman Maclean*

Maclean wrote *River* after 40 years of teaching; he fished the trout streams of Montana all his life.

Everybody who thinks about such things remembers Hemingway's *Big Two-hearted River.* And, in *The Sun Also Rises,* the wonderful scene in which Jake Barnes and Bill Gorton catch trout on the Irati River and "utilize" the wine of northern Spain. But since then, partly because hardly anybody writes well enough about fishing to transcend the subject, partly because the reputations of fiction writers have for so long been in the custody of Eastern cityfolk and academics, at least in the public mind fly fishing and what passes for serious literature have rarely intersected.

That is until 1976, when Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It* came along. It has an unforgettable and now much-quoted first sentence: "In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing." Also a view, in succinct paraphrase of his Scottish Presbyterian father, that "man by nature was a mess," that "all good things—trout as well as eternal salvation—come by grace and grace comes by art and art does not come easy." The book, in fact, only seems to be about fly fishing. It is really an elegy for an age gone by and a much loved brother gone bad. But the Big Blackfoot River in western Montana is its medium—and carries much of its message—and it treats fly fishing as a beautiful and even a redemptive art.

In a scene from the film, Norman Maclean's brother, Paul, works out some line on the Big Blackfoot River.

The story takes the form of a surpassingly skillful memoir, artfully fictionalized here and there, delicately shaded in darks and lights by the sharp edges of perfectly recollected detail. A rarity in any age, Maclean has a voice entirely his own, equally accommodating to low comedy and high seriousness. On the stream with him, a reader may one moment find himself listening to a fish story as it might be told in a Montana bunkhouse, with rainbows the size of speedboats churning around the Blackfoot and striking at flies like something escaped from *Jaws.* The next moment the cadences of his prose and the sound of the running river seem to flow toward the mysterious heart of the world. In an oblique echo of the 23d Psalm, it closes with the words "I am haunted by waters."

At the heart of Maclean's world was family: the father a minister, the mother hardly heard from, and Norman's brash and engaging younger brother, Paul. The two boys grew up together in Missoula, Montana, before, during and after World War I. Missoula was a tough town, full of lumberjacks, back-alley fistfights, ladies of the night—and fishermen. Stores sold silk-wound, bamboo Montague (pronounced MONTAIG in those parts) fishing rods for $3.80 and kept bundles of tips handy to replace those splintered by the big rain-

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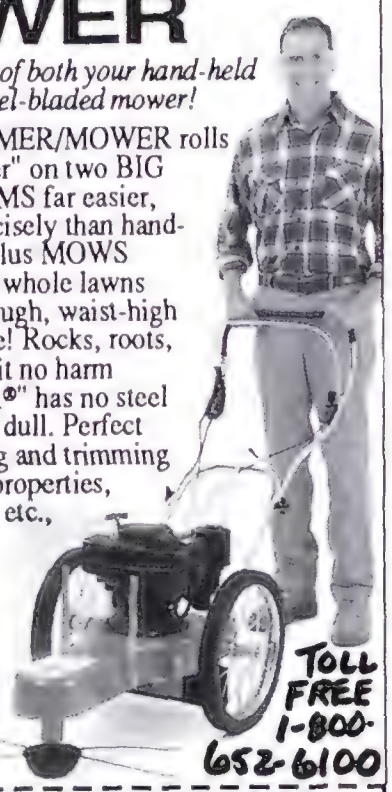

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bows that got away. As Norman tells it, Paul soon became a ladies' man, a daredevil street fighter, a master fisherman and a guy who would bet on anything, preferably himself. Both boys were tough. It was a Maclean maxim that "if it looks like a fight is coming, get in the first punch."

Norman, the slighter of the two, had to work at being tough and, in the best Western fashion, acted tougher than he was. Paul was three years younger but heavier; in fighting as in everything else—except in asking for or taking help—a natural who simply knew that he was tougher than anyone.

The story builds softly to a sudden offstage tragedy that Maclean was to mourn for a lifetime, perhaps not only with a brother's sorrow but with a brother's guilt. When Paul is beaten to death, ostensibly in a fight over unpaid gambling debts, father and son ask each other: "Do you think I could have helped him?" And Maclean writes, "How can a question be answered that asks a lifetime of questions." Clearly Maclean, who did not write the book until he was 73, had asked himself the question over and over. For years, out fishing with his son, John (now a Chicago newspaperman), he called the boy "Paul."

Just as clearly, *A River Runs Through It* is some kind of literary wonder, the kind of story that rings in the heart of memory yet demands to be read again. Serious critics were soon calling it a masterpiece, among them Alfred Kazin, whose book *On Native Grounds* was one of the first critical studies to take modern American prose seriously. As *River*'s reputation—and sales—grew, literate fly fishermen (whom the literati tend to treat as if they'd had prefrontal lobotomies) enjoyed themselves considerably.

Norman Maclean might have come from darkest Montana. As a boy he would come home to sleep after a bloody Saturday-night fight. His father would wake him the next morning and ask how he'd done. If he'd won, the minister would say, "Good. Take it easy. Sleep it off." If he'd lost, it was, "Get out of bed and over to church. Shame on you." In old age, as he evolved into a celebrity, he was sometimes savage-tongued and truculent.

Nobody in academe or out of it, however, was going to patronize the man as some poor poetaster of the hook-and-bullet press. This Western

Beside heavy water on the Gallatin River, where fishing sequences were made, Robert Redford talks over a shot with camera crew.

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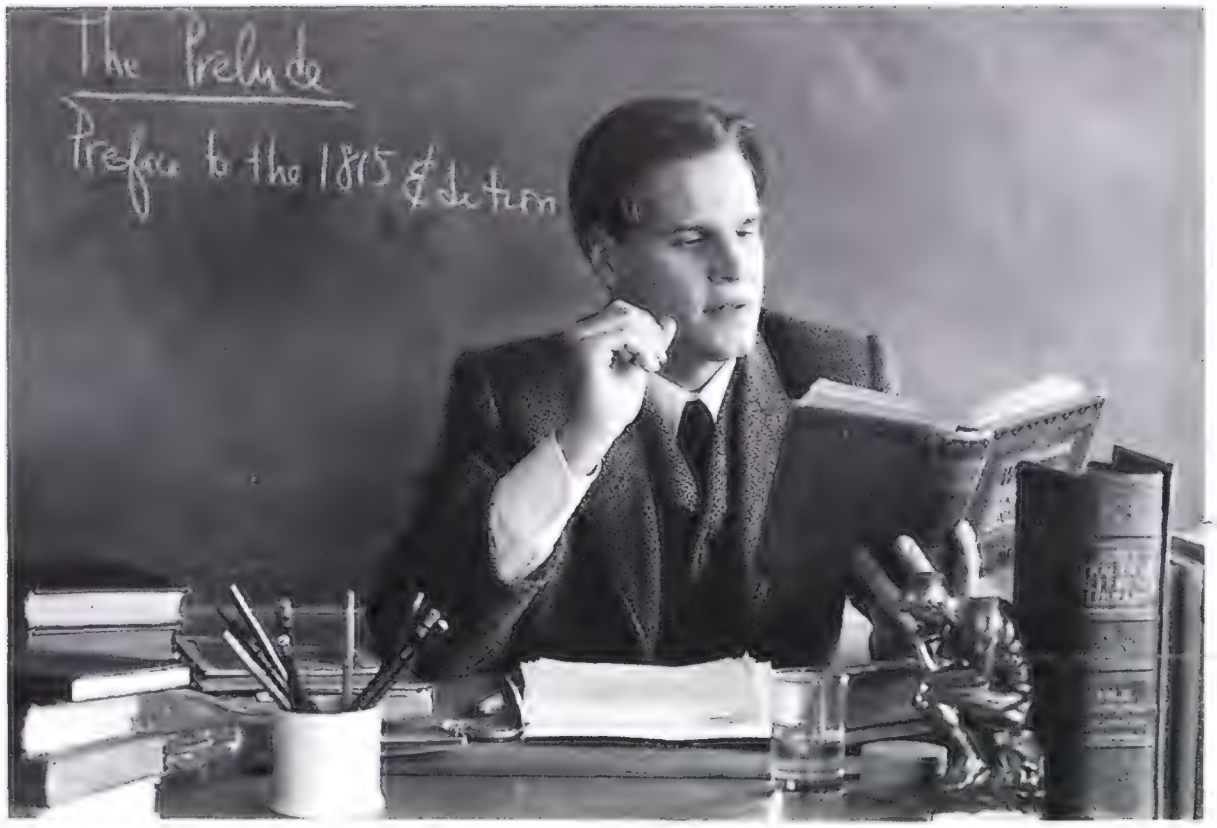
Norman Maclean (above) when he was a young English instructor; Craig Sheffer (right), who plays him in the film, strikes a pose teaching Wordsworth.



Paul Maclean (above) when he was working as newspaperman in Helena, Montana, and (at right) as played by youthful Brad Pitt in the film.

roughneck was also a neo-Aristotelian scholar-critic, famous for his analysis of lyric poetry. His father, he once said, wanted him "to be a tough guy," and his mother wanted him "to be a flower girl. So I ended being a tough flower girl." He also became a tough, inspiring teacher, but one capable, like his father, "of using the word 'beautiful' as a part of natural speech." Before writing *River*, he had taught Shakespeare and the Romantic Poets at the University of Chicago for more than 40 years. Three times he won the Quantrell Award as the university's greatest teacher; no other professor at Chicago had ever done that.

River soon became a cult book, not only among outdoorsmen and fisherfolk, but for all sorts of readers. Gossip about its bizarre birth and shaky launching helped sales. It had been rejected by commercial publishers, once because it had "trees in it." The University of Chicago Press finally published it out of deference to Maclean but, it was said, never having published any new fiction before, initially knew little about promoting or selling such a volume. Publicity continued when the judges nominated it for the Pulitzer Prize in 1977, but the Pulitzer Advisory Board, as it often does for eccentric reasons, exercised its right to overrule.

Then the question arose: Could it, would it, should it ever be made into a movie? And if so, how?

The first part of that question has

been answered. A film version of *A River Runs Through It* is being released this fall. At the same time, more or less riding piggyback on it, a new edition of the book will appear, a mass paperback from Pocket Books. This month, too, the University of Chicago Press will bring out Maclean's final work, *Young Men and Fire*, another sort of elegy about smokejumpers who parachuted to their deaths in a Montana forest fire in 1949.

Two years after Maclean's death and 16 years after *River*, all sorts of people will be introduced again to a remarkable writer, a remarkable book and the remarkable lifelong grief that gave rise to it.

Where the possibility of a film was concerned, however, for years the prognosis seemed hopeless. Much of *River*'s action involved dry fly fishing, a highly repetitive and individualistic sport. The book's magic derived not from action but from Maclean's resounding prose. There were no major female characters. What dialogue there was came muffled by Scottish reticence. The story's dramatic climax, for instance, is delivered by Paul in just seven words: "I'll never leave Montana. Let's go fishing."

In addition to the problems of the material, Maclean seemed to be rejecting any and all movie offers. He demanded, so it was rumored, the kind of control that Hollywood just doesn't give. Several film companies sent lawyers with offers. One group, Maclean complained, tried for 18 months to buy the rights without ever reading the book. Of film people generally, he remarked with characteristic ferocity, "Now there is a bunch that eats what they find run over on the road."

Enter, finally, Robert Redford. At 55, time has at last printed some crow's-feet at the corners of his eyes. Still, he suggests the golden boy in *The Way We Were* and a dozen other roles, some kind of Sundance Kid out of Southern California whose looks and charm have made everything come easy. The impression is misleading. He is a serious fellow who for years has put money, effort, time and talent into protecting the lands and waters of the West, and of the world.

He is also the film personality who, more than any other, has worked at ways to do—and help other people do—films that don't fall into Hollywood's increasingly pile-driving, heavy-breathing mode. Utah's annual Sundance Film Festival, a function of the Sundance Institute which Redford created, has become the showcase for the best original film work done in the United States. In addition to being a superstar, over the past ten years or so Redford has become a prizewinning director-producer, a sort of one-man, Yankee Merchant-Ivory team, translating into film complex and subtle American fiction, notably John Nichols' engaging but interminable New Mexican novel *The Milagro Beanfield War* and Judith Guest's *Ordinary People*, which won four Academy

Tom Skerrit, as the Rev. Maclean, and "sons" practice casting learned for film.

Board Editor Timothy Foote is a fly fisherman who wrote on Europe in 1492 in SMITHSONIAN, *December 1991.*

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Awards, including one for him as best director.

Norman Maclean liked what he heard about *Ordinary People*. Like the book, the film explored the guilt of a surviving brother and the kind of punishment that loving families that can't talk about private grief often inflict on themselves. Redford grew up in a Scotch-Irish family full of emotionally charged silence and is sensitive to such matters. When I talked to him he seemed to identify with Paul. Since the 1960s, many families have watched helplessly as sons and brothers, gifted, charming, full of life and energy, simply drifted off into inner darkness—sometimes to be subtracted from the world entirely. "Did you have a son or a brother in danger like that?" I asked.

"I *was* that son," he said. "I *was* that brother."

And he went on to say that in his family, silence was used as a weapon of disapproval. As a small boy he had been given to understand that he was bad. His scoutmaster father kicked him out of his own troop. "I did dangerous things," he said. "School made no sense to me." It was athletics that saved him, he says. And a baseball scholarship to the University of Colorado, though he quit there and went to France to study art. But Redford also sees the old-fashioned habit of shutting up about your problems as a source of inner strength, part and parcel of a stoical frontier toughness, now vanishing into the past, that younger generations "can hardly relate to."

He has a point. These are whiny times, full of easy emotions easily shared in public. Every TV sitcom seems to have as its denouement a scene in which father and son (or whoever) throw their arms around each other and yell "I love you, Dad!" or "I love you, Son!" Compare Maclean's lines: "In our family men folk did not go around saying they loved each other." When he gave Maclean's book to writer Richard Friedenberg, whom he hoped would do the script, Redford said, "This is my family." Friedenberg recalls with a laugh, "It wasn't *my* family. In *my* family, everybody talked and yelled about their feelings all the time."

Friedenberg regards all the charged emotional restraint between Paul and the family as "pre-Freudian." Today, he says, "we'd have gotten him into AA or some kind of group therapy." ("Heck," commented Redford to me, "in some families they'd have sat around the kitchen table and cried with him.") Because Friedenberg had written *The Promise*, a 1986 television drama about two brothers that was later sprinkled heavily with Emmy awards, *River* seemed a good fit. But because the book offered so little of the dramatic dialogue that a successful film needs, initially he wanted to turn down the assignment. "I can't do this film, Bob," he kidded Redford. "Jews don't fish."

As a pretty girl in a Model T, Maclean's future wife, Jessie (played by English actress Emily Lloyd), will take smitten Norman for a bumpy ride.

Happily, Redford persuaded him. Then they both began months of digging into the life and times and works of Norman Maclean. Their aim: to find enough more or less true and dramatic material to let them make a film that would work and still meet with the old man's approval.

Redford wanted to call attention to the plight of rivers—he belongs to the American Rivers Association and is on the board of trustees of the Natural Resources Defense Council. But essentially, like some 400,000 or so other people who have bought the book (it has gone to four editions and 18 reprintings) he had simply fallen in love with Maclean's words. And precisely because he *is* Redford, he could raise money for the film and at the same time make a deal with Maclean that Hollywood probably wouldn't have given to the late William Shakespeare. Says Redford's producer, Patrick Markey, "If I'd turned up at a studio with a literary property like that, they'd have said, 'Are you kidding?'"

It was agreed that in the early stages Maclean would be consulted repeatedly. He would get a chance to approve, disapprove and discuss changes in the first script. At any point he could drop out, and they would both forget the whole thing. "But," says Redford, "if once we both agreed to the script, then he agreed to get the hell out and let me make the film."

Friedenberg started researching in 1988. Maclean was old, sick and

desperately trying to finish *Young Men and Fire*. Friedenberg interviewed him as best he could, listened to tapes of his University of Chicago lectures (Maclean used to tell students that studying poetry without understanding rhythm and metrics was like "going to the senior prom and not being able to dance"). He talked to the family and pored over Maclean's high school and college yearbooks (Dartmouth, 1924), read old newspaper stories in Montana, searched through Maclean scrapbooks. He chatted with old Montana friends like George Croonenberghs, mentioned in *River* as friend and fly tier. Now a retired railroad engineer, he still ties great flies and was one of Norman's closest friends and fishing companions.

These fishing expeditions yielded all sorts of material, some of it used—though heightened—in the film, some not. In the film, but not in the book, the brothers, egged on by the infectiously fearless Paul, risk life and limb "shooting-the-chutes" on the Big Blackfoot at night in a "borrowed" rowboat. The height of the waterfalls involved, created from footage shot on five rivers by Patrick Markey's roving camera units, makes the adventure seem crazy enough to suggest Paul's character. In real life, though, George Croonenberghs told me, the boys, with considerably less danger, ran the river after dark in a duck boat while fishing, turned over in heavy rapids and lost their rods.

For reasons of taste, some memorable book moments have been rendered less salty. At the end of the famous outing with Neal, the bait-fishing phony, and Old Rawhide, the semipro prostitute, Paul-in-the-film does *not* kick the lady's bare sunburned posterior, symmetrically tatooed with the letters LO VE. Paul-in-the-book did so. Some incidents have been brilliantly expanded. In the book when Norman has to get Paul and his date, a sulky, beautiful Indian girl, out of jail, it is because Paul hit a guy in a restaurant who yelled "Wahoo!" at her. (Until the late 1950s stores and restaurants in some Montana towns bore signs saying: "No dogs or Indians allowed.") In the film that scene is preceded by one in which Paul comes off as masterful and politically correct by getting the girl into a Prohibition speakeasy over the objections of a management that officially doesn't serve Indians.

Maclean was pleased with the scenes that gave more boyhood detail. Nor did he object to Redford and Company's biggest change: to provide the film with a major female character, probably essential to box office appeal, by making Norman's meeting with and courtship of his real-life wife, Jessie Burns, an important element in the story. In the book, the two have been married six or seven years, and

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The shift meant moving the film's principal action back from the late 1930s, when Paul in fact was killed, to circa 1926, when Jessie and Norman met—actually in a snowstorm. A Fourth of July dance and fireworks fitted the film better, there being little fly fishing in Montana in winter. Besides, the Fourth of July doings gave director Redford an additional chance to dwell lovingly upon one of his considerable interests, the Americana of the Western past.

The Croonenberghs, who knew Jessie well, described her to me as "a redhead, tall, smart and funny," a woman daring by temperament, like Paul. A scene from the movie (true) shows her trying to scare the wits out of Norman by turning her Model T touring car off a blocked road, up onto some tracks of the Northern Pacific railroad, and then treating him to a neck-jolting, tooth-rattling ride across a high trestle and into a tunnel—through which unscheduled freight trains ran.

If you are Merchant-Ivory trying to make a perfect film out of a celebrated English novel like *Howards End*, you already have something very like sumptuous Edwardian England at your fingertips: splendid town houses with creamy facades, the delights of Fortnum & Mason at Christmastime, richly caparisoned horses that seem to have stepped out of a James Tissot painting, legions of actors experienced in nuance.

Trying to make a perfectly faithful film out of this Western masterpiece, all that Redford needed as background was an accurately grungy little 1920s logging and mining town, and he pretty much had to knock it together himself. What he and much praised French cinematographer Philippe Rousselot did have at their fingertips were plenty of mountain rivers and some of the best high-country scenery in the world.

As it turned out, neither Missoula (now too big) nor the Big Blackfoot was much help. The Blackfoot has too much timber cutting nearby for beautiful panoramic shots of wilderness. For fishing scenes Redford chose the Gallatin, 200 miles away, a wilder stream that flows out of Yellowstone. Nearby Livingston, Montana (pop. 7,000), looked more like the Missoula of Maclean's youth. Even so, Redford and Markey had to have false fronts and an extra story added on to a couple of blocks of East Callender Street. They also buried the street's surface under layers of dirt and sand. (Except for the dirt, many local folk figured East Callender looked better that way.) Redford is a stickler for detail. Besides, he was going to begin the film as a sepia documentary, using photographs of pre-World War I Missoula, and things had to match.

Teams of researchers had already rifled the local museum for photographs and artifacts when, two summers ago, Redford and Company arrived to occupy (and preoccupy) Livingston for three months. They tried out local people for crowd scenes (at $4.50 an hour) and even cast a local 6-year-old, Vann Gravage, in the considerable role of Paul as a small boy. An elementary school served as the jail. The Redeemer Lutheran Church, with some face-lifting behind the pulpit, stood in for the Reverend Maclean's Presbyterian setting. Redford hired the entire civic center, hard by the Yellowstone River, and the Maclean house was built inside it, with ingenious sliding walls to help with camera work.

Despite the piscatorial hauteur that Maclean sometimes displays in the book, Norman and Paul had a much simpler approach to fly fishing than the exquisitely equipped anglers of today are used to. They waded the Big Blackfoot in khaki pants and worn-out logging boots. They fished with huge flies—Nos. 2, 4 and 6, mostly. Their gut leaders were never finer than what today we'd call 1x. They carried no nets. "We'd just work 'em in to the bank," says George Croonenberghs, "and jump on 'em." They took their limit most every time out (25 fish in those days), and they didn't always properly kill the fish they took, either—at least in the book Norman makes a depressing reference to trout "thumping" in his creel.

Markey is a fly fisherman, however. So is Redford. With half the fly-fishing population of America figuratively (and, it sometimes seemed, literally) looking over their shoulder, they were determined to make everything authentic. In Livingston, Montana, in the summer of 1991, trout experts were practically unlimited. Not to mention master casters and fish biologists and stream improvers and students of antique gear and representatives of fly-fishing schools and equipment houses.

There were people to teach the young actors Craig Sheffer and Brad Pitt, who played Norman and Paul, how to cast. One teacher, the film's fishing adviser, John Bailey, who runs his late father's nationally known fishing and outdoor supply store in town, recalls that he got nowhere until he told the actors that how you cast reflects your personality. There was even a mechanical trout, a 22-inch rainbow named Fernando, made of lead and fiberglass. When placed at a properly adjusted depth, it could be made to roll up to the surface for the cameramen as if slashing at a fly. Fernando could also "dimple," the proud wife of Fernando's inventor told

me, denoting the movement of a big fish when, rising slowly, it just barely touches the surface of a quiet pool.

Most perplexing of all were representatives of the Humane Society of the United States, on hand to see that no trout suffered injury or death. The fish in the film were trucked from a hatchery or private ponds to the Gallatin in specially cooled and aerated water, then placed in the stream in wire pens. No barbed hooks could be used on them, even in action, so Bailey finally worked out a method of painlessly attaching monofilament to their jaws. (Some were slightly drugged to slow them down.) Mostly, it was discovered, the best stand-in for a fighting trout in fast water is a quart milk carton partly filled with rocks; attached to rod and line, it veers erratically back and forth under the surface.

Even the great trout that Paul chases downstream, lands and joyfully holds up near the film's end came to no harm. It was held (briefly) by the jaw but without harming the gills—much safer, Bailey insists, than any other way. During the shooting, whenever it looked peaked, the fish was returned to aerated water for R&R.

Fly fishermen, who will no doubt flock to the film when it is released, can expect to be soothed by the sound and sight of Rousselot's visions of rushing waters. They will see some fishing. A close-up of a fly being tied on by the brown-spotted hands of Maclean as old man and narrator. Trout striking and being played. An example of a roll cast, which occurs when, because of cramped quarters behind him, Norman can't have any back cast, a process he likens in the book to depriving "a pitcher of his wind-up." A moment of what fly fishermen know as "matching the hatch" occurs, too, as Norman scrapes a stone fly off his neck, sees a hatch of them in the air, selects an artificial model from his fly box, lays it out upon troubled waters and hooks into a big fish while Paul still has nothing.

Though Redford reveled in every inch of it, much of the fishing footage had to be left on the cutting room floor. He had a much more complex problem in dramatic balance than in making sure the film did not come informally labeled "For Fishermen Only." The problem involved casting, but of a different kind—in this case the question of who would play Paul, and how. And this in turn involved, as it would for any filmmaker, a troublesome and even mysterious lack of balance in the book.

It is Maclean's convention in *River* that the family never really know or talk about what Paul does when he is away from them, though it is briefly conveyed that he has a hair-trigger temper, fights too much, drinks, has a packstring of women, and sometimes consorts with crooks and gamblers.

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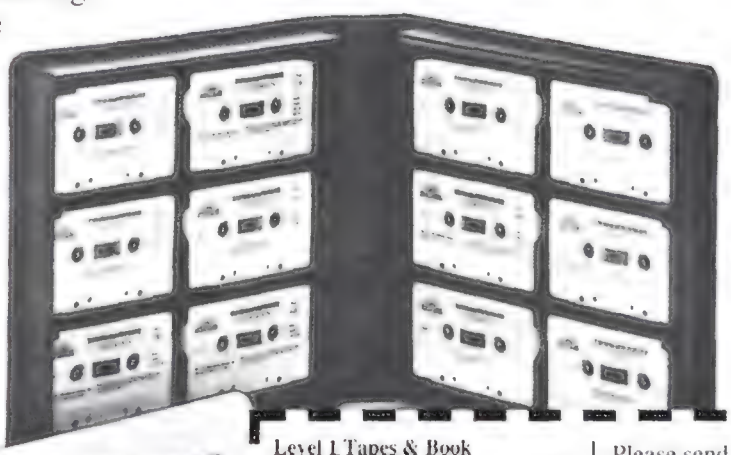

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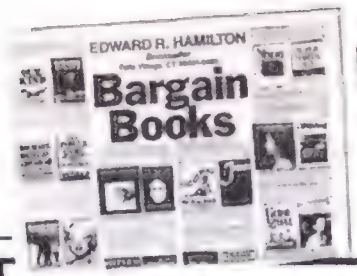

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Norman once explained, "Unless you can see and feel about my brother as his father and brother did, I have no story to tell about him." That's why, in the book, a reader never sees Paul except through Norman's selective and artful memory of the moments they shared together. It is Maclean's book, after all, and he makes it work convincingly. Except for rumored offstage doings and Paul's occasional talks about scrapes he's in, the reader takes Paul as Norman presents him, as a generous, headstrong but loving and often considerate son and brother.

In dealing with Redford, Maclean refused to answer questions about Paul. In fact, Paul was not killed in Montana but followed Norman to Dartmouth (class of 1928), something both book and film avoid. In the mid-'30s, under what family pressure no one knows, he moved to Chicago and was killed there in 1938—not over gambling debts but on a Saturday night when, according to one report to the police, he may have been looking for a fight. *River,* Maclean kept insisting to Redford, was "the story of a deeply loving family that did not understand each other and could not offer help or ask for it." Nothing more. And any film he approved should be the same.

Film (any film) and fiction (any fiction) both require a mix of show and tell. But film requires far more showing than telling. Maclean was terrified that simply in trying to personify the character of Paul successfully, Redford would have to branch out into the dark side of Paul's life. Essentially Redford agreed with Maclean. And he understood that, though *River* derives considerable validity from being mostly true, it is only a fragment of the truth, one that Maclean could live with and wanted the world to remember. Maclean taught the Romantic Poets, after all. As Shelley for his dead friend and rival Keats in "Adonais," so Norman for his lost brother, Paul.

"Anyway," says Redford, "it didn't

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make stylistic sense to go into the anatomy of the man's destruction." But that didn't make the problem of dramatic balance go away. Anyone who has read the book knows that for the film to work, whoever plays Paul must be handsome, magnetic, full of life and energy, and infectiously radiant, though touched by shadows: a character who, playing opposite someone playing Norman, threatens to run away with a story meant to be Norman's. In *Ordinary People*, with a stroke of casting genius, Redford chose America's brisk and beautiful comedic sweetheart Mary Tyler Moore to play a mother rendered almost lethal by controlled grief. With *River* he gave his show a brilliant burst of life by casting as Paul the boyish Brad Pitt, the larcenous young hitchhiker in *Thelma and Louise* who charms the pants off Thelma (played by Geena Davis).

The film begins as a combination of frontier documentary and scrapbook ramble through the family past, with Maclean's words deftly used as voice-over, getting us through the look of the town they roved in as little

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kids. Paul refuses to eat his oatmeal. Mornings, Norman stays home from school with his father to learn to write "short" and without self-indulgent adjectives or adverbs. Essay topics must be done at 200 words, then shrunk to 100, then (if accepted by the Reverend) are tossed away. A bit older, Norman goes on to summers lumberjacking and firefighting for the U.S. Forest Service, Paul to lifeguarding at a local pool where all the girls hang out.

The real drama doesn't begin until 1926. Norman is home from Dartmouth, where he has done graduate work and taught, as well, and doesn't know what he'll do with his life. In a sense, Paul, by then a successful reporter in Helena and a local fishing celebrity, has surpassed his big brother. And Redford skillfully puts a slight edge on their brotherly competition—not only in catching fish and girls, where Paul will always be miles ahead, but in winning the Reverend's approval.

He also sharpens Norman's always understated reservations about Paul's doings, even small but significant things like drinking in the morning at his newspaper office, not coming home to be with the family when Norman returns from Dartmouth, or leaving one of their mother's dinners early to see some cronies. This thread of disapproval and incipient anger reaches a head when, on the night Norman announces that he will marry Jessie Burns, by way of celebration Paul takes him to a gambling joint. This does not happen in the book.

Except for a boyhood fistfight, this is the nearest thing to a dramatic conflict between the two that the film provides. The seismic fluctuations in their relationship—clearly a deep but uneasy love—are recorded mainly by pauses, hesitations, glances. The brothers learned to listen to what each other didn't say. If your senses are still reeling from the sledgehammer pace of *Terminator II*, such things may fly by unnoticed. And in truth, Redford

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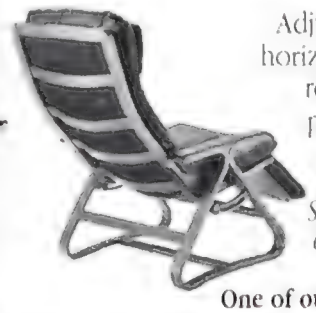
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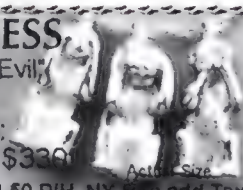
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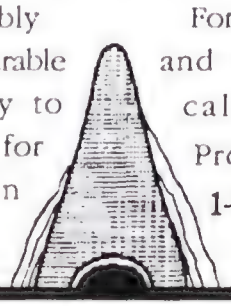
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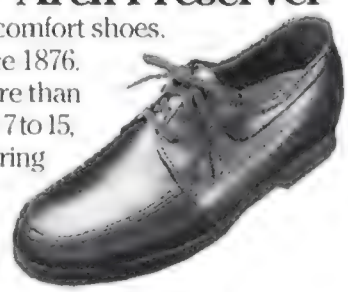
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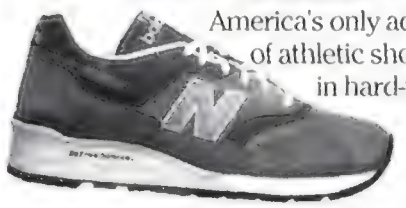
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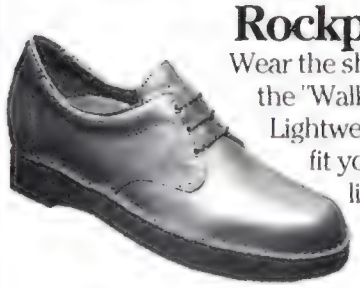
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has hewed so faithfully to Maclean's splendid language that it helps to have a sharp ear, variously tuned to silences, understatements, throwaway lines and the occasional Delphic utterance.

How far the Redford-Maclean style is from most contemporary films came to me during a moment, perhaps *the* moment, of Norman's triumph in the search for his father's approval. He has word of a job at the University of Chicago, heads toward the Reverend's study with the news, and hears his father reciting poetry to himself. At a pause, Norman chimes in. His father listens. Then they both proceed together. Can it be? These two characters are running bits of Wordsworth by each other, a poet, one should note, whose works Norman taught for decades. The poem is "Intimations of Immortality," one of the Reverend's favorites. The lines they quote begin, ". . . But trailing clouds of glory . . ." and end, "Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

It is in the handling of Brad Pitt as Paul that Redford manages to do most for the somehow caring yet careless character that Maclean's brother has to be. In the film he is a winning physical presence: a boy-man seemingly with limitless reserves of energy, a son who can dance his mother around and hug her as Norman never could, and bring jokey life to a family dinner. Paul is the kind of guy every little brother would like to have as a big brother. In Paul's tones of voice and the expression of his eyes, often seen close up, can be read, like reflections on shifting water, the tiniest fleeting presences of jealousy giving way to generosity over Norman's good fortune, of sorrow manfully driven out by joy and humor. Until, for one shattering instant outside the gambling hall, Paul's eyes give away the desperation that will destroy him.

Looking back on the film now that it is finished, Redford is satisfied. He feels he has kept his word to Maclean but admits to mixed feelings about the

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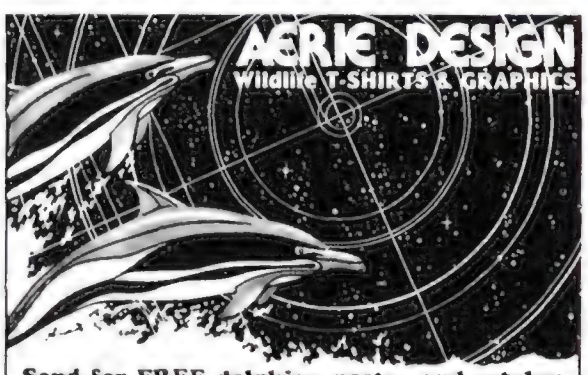

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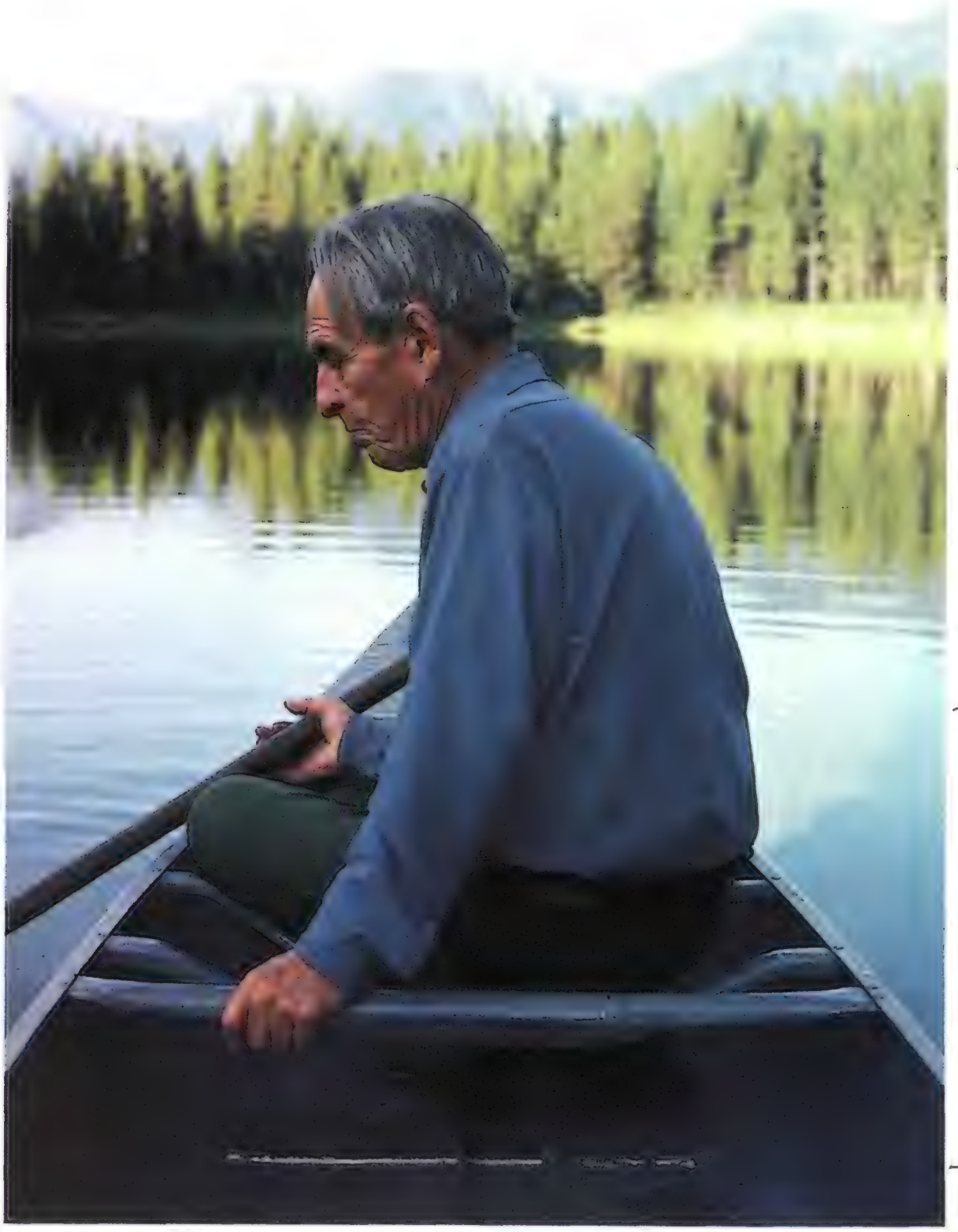
fact that Norman did not live to see it done. "I think he would have been pleased," he says, then adds, "he was so tough and critical he might not be." Those people I've talked to who knew Norman Maclean are convinced that whatever agreement he made with Redford, had he been healthy and around during the shooting, it would have been impossible to complete the film.

How *A River Runs Through It* will fare at the box office, only audiences and the Byzantine vagaries of today's film distribution system can decide. It is a remarkably faithful rendering into a film of one of the least likely books for the purpose imaginable, a book so powerful in its feeling that a film can hardly hope to match it. Rivers run through it, though, so it is beautiful not only to see but to hear. It was done with care and art for purposes having more to do with affection and knowledge than with commerce. Anyone who sees it, like anyone who reads Norman Maclean's book, runs some risk of being haunted by waters.

Norman Maclean, lost in reflection on a Montana lake: "In our family," he once said, "nature was a medium of our love, a carrier of it, an object of it, a cause of it."



Book reviews

¡baja!
Photographs by Terrence Moore,
text by Doug Peacock
Bullfinch Press/Little, Brown, $40

Vermilion Sea: A Naturalist's Journey in Baja California
John Janovy jr.
Houghton Mifflin, $19.95

Terry Moore, like all good photographers, knows intuitively that his sense of wonder is his one indispensable professional gift, the sine qua non of the photojournalism biz. The rest of us toe the sand, tug our forelocks, meditate and cogitate and eventually fetch up at the conclusion Terry knew all along without having to think about it, that wonder is the observer's essential quality.

I'd better be up-front here: Terry and his wife, Suzi, are friends of mine. I've known them through their moves from Tucson to Sonora to Durango, and I've seen their wonder in action, even fussed about it on the occasions when it demanded a predawn wake-up call to behold some spectacle in its most glorious light. Terry is forever pursuing perfect light, which means that he is forever at his duty station, exercising his sense of wonder, at sunrise and sunset. Terry and Suzi both say "Oh, wow!" a lot, stretching the words like sighs as they regard some natural phenomenon that excites them. Some of their friends believe that if they ever die, which seems unlikely, the inscriptions on their gravestones should be something like "Here Lies Terry. Oh! . . ." and "Here Lies Suzi. Wow! . . ."

This is not a complaint, I hasten to add, because I'm one of those jaded clods who need a wonder recharge from time to time, like the glazed-eyed worthy in the *New Yorker* cartoon staring at the TV while his wife whispers darkly, "George has lost his capacity for wonder." Terry knows how to fix this, just by being his natural, open-to-everything, oh-wow self. Am I biased? *Sí.*

Terry's gift is vividly evident in *¡baja!*, the word-and-picture book he did with Doug Peacock (with an introduction by Peter Matthiessen). Baja California is a weird, gaunt, spiky place with a beauty not instantly apparent but nonetheless real, and Terry's open, welcoming style captures it. Mountains and cactus and sea, scraggly villages and forlorn little churches, butterscotch mornings and vermilion sundowns—I look at these pictures and I see Terry and Suzi, equipment checked and double-checked, clop-clopping for the 500th time into the desert at 5:15 in the morning.

Baja's charm has to do with its peculiar blend of ocean and desert, with the sense of menace in its silent and severe landscape, and with its status as an area as yet largely innocent of development, though resorts have sprouted recently at its southern end. Gray whales migrate annually to a fantastic place called Scammon's Lagoon on the Pacific side, where they once were hunted to near extinction. World-class lizards like iguanas and chuckwallas live in the withered hills, and vast flocks of pelicans, gulls

Terry Moore's image of boojum tree conveys gaunt, spiky beauty of Baja.

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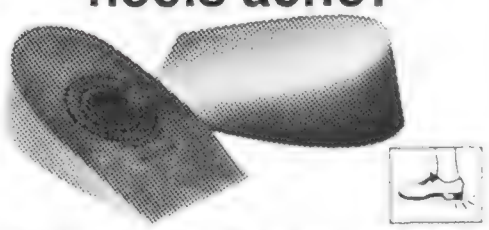

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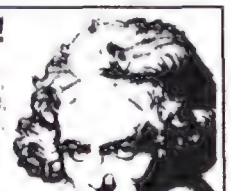

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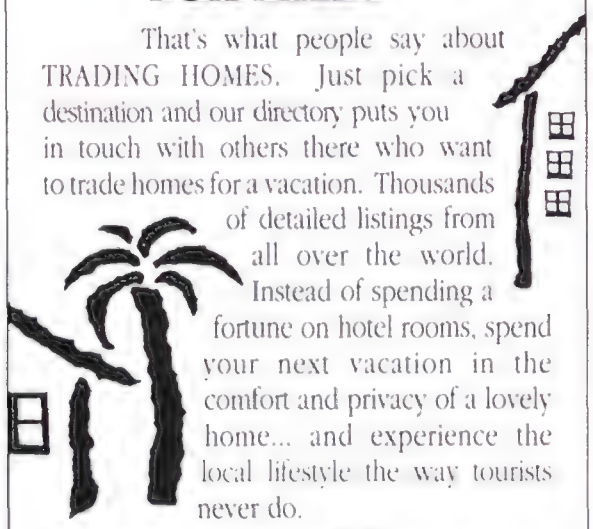

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and cormorants patrol the shoreline. Terry Moore's pictures do what travel journalism is supposed to do: I've never been to Baja, but in his photographs I can taste the dust on my tongue and feel the stillness. He puts me there.

Doug Peacock's text is at its best when he lets it rip as his friend Ed Abbey so often did in his writings about the Southwest. His chronicle of a solitary island idyll is highlighted by his discovery that he can sustain himself by clam digging and the fortuitous washing ashore of five cans of beer, their contents fizzless but nevertheless welcome. Like Moore, Peacock plainly loves a place where he can "roam unfettered, living out of a backpack . . . climbing over a volcanic pass studded with pitahaya, and looking down another unexplored wild palm canyon." He probably says "Oh, wow!" a lot too.

John Janovy jr., author of *Vermilion Sea*, is a different kind of Baja traveler. A biologist at the University of Nebraska, Janovy knows the names of the plants and shells and birds he sees and understands their relationships. What he's after here is the essence of Baja through a series of meditations on its parts—cactus and mountains, whales and intertidal critters, and more.

Early on, Janovy explains a seminal source of his infatuation with this haunting, arid landscape. He is a great admirer of John Steinbeck and Edward Ricketts' classic chronicle of Baja natural history, *Sea of Cortez*. "Steinbeck's narrative," he writes, "gives legitimacy to the act of exploration for its own sake." Janovy has set out with two ends in mind: "to see a live, wild, whale and put my hands into the Gulf of California, where Steinbeck and Ricketts had grubbed for starfish."

Janovy has a quirky and original mind, and sees things in a way no one else does. In one inspired passage he speculates on the rhetorical questions that cormorants, those "stoic philosophers," might be asking as they study their environment: "What does it mean to be a rock? In how many forms does the ripple exist? How can a pelican be so stupid and still survive? Why fly?"

In his descriptions of Baja, Janovy aspires not to poetry but to a philosophical synthesis, a distillation of all that the place is and means and teaches us. The book is full of good observations. "Discreteness, instead of continuity, is possibly the most pervasive feature of the Lower California landscape," he writes. "Borders are sharp; cracks, seams, quartz veins, shadows, separate the colors and textures. . . ." But too much of the time the author seems more interested in exploring his own mind than the wondrous place he is visiting.

He does, however, manage to overhear one memorable conversation on a whale-watching cruise out of San Diego, one female tourist to another:

"Isn't it whales that have blubbers?"

"I don't know."

"Isn't that what they were taking them for, their blubbers?"

"I think so; that sounds right."

Donald Dale Jackson lives and writes in the wilds of Connecticut.

Fantastic Archaeology: The Wild Side of North American Prehistory
Stephen Williams
University of Pennsylvania Press, $28.95/$14.95 paper

The notion that ancient peoples reached North America by crossing a land bridge at the Bering Strait some 15,000 years ago is positively dull compared with the host of theories about other prehistoric travelers to this continent.

Consider James Churchward's tale about the survivors of the continent of Mu, fleeing eastward to North America from that "earthly paradise" as it sank into the Pacific Ocean some 13,000 years ago. Or psychic Edgar Cayce's claim that survivors of Atlantis abandoned *that* sinking continent for the Yucatán peninsula in ships and crude aircraft. There are stories of early Celts mining copper in the New World, a sixth-century Irish monk crossing the Atlantic in a hide-covered boat, African traders leaving their mark on the pre-Columbian art of Mexico, peripatetic Vikings depositing rune stones from Minnesota to Oklahoma. (For the record, the Vikings *did* build a settlement on the coast of Newfoundland about 500 years before Columbus' voyage.)

The problem with all of these ideas, says Harvard archaeologist Stephen Williams, is that scientists find no "ground truths" to back them up—no prehistoric post holes, no hand axes or burial mounds. Nothing so mundane as carbonized seeds or coprolites ever turns up alongside the remarkable relics described in this wide-ranging, lively survey of archaeological fraud and foolishness.

A "Norse tower" in Rhode Island is actually a 17th-century structure. The

walls of a "tenth-century Irish monastery" in New Hampshire contain artifacts that date to the 19th century. A "mini-Stonehenge" in Massachusetts dates not to the Druids but to early 20th-century builders of a swimming pool. Scientific scrutiny treats none of the finds in this book kindly, but like bad pennies, they keep turning up.

During the latter half of the 19th century the race was on to locate evidence of prehistoric man in the United States. Fossil hunters had uncovered the bones of mastodons but had found no scrapers or spear points to associate these extinct animals with humans. In Europe, a mammoth tusk bearing an engraving of a woolly mammoth had been discovered in 1864 at La Madeleine rock shelter in France.

Enter Hilborne T. Cresson. In the spring of 1890, this amateur archaeologist announced that 26 years earlier—the year 1864, curiously enough—while walking near Holly Oak in the lower Delaware River valley he had found embedded in peat excavations a shell engraved with a stunning likeness of a mammoth. Few people believed the story. The journal *Science* judged the engraving recent. (Interestingly, Cresson had, during the 1870s, "pursued studies at [Paris'] Ecole des Beaux-Arts," where, presumably, he had a chance to brush up on his draftsman's skills. He also attended classes in anthropology and visited archaeological sites.) In 1891 Cresson was fired from an Ohio archaeological site for stealing artifacts; a few years later he committed suicide, leaving a note claiming that he was suspected of counterfeiting and was being followed by "Secret Service detectives."

There the matter of the Holly Oak Gorget might have remained, were it not for two Delaware scientists who, in 1976, after a microscopic examination of Cresson's find, declared the engraving genuine. (Never mind that the "archaeological context" in which Cresson said he found the shell was too young for mammoths; never mind that a radiocarbon test dated the shell itself at less than a thousand years old.) The author suggests, in fact, that the shell gorget "with no engraving on it, may well be from the very late Fort Ancient culture of Ohio," reminding readers that Cresson later was accused of stealing artifacts from one Ohio site.

The will to believe is strong, Williams suggests, stronger than Occam's razor (a rule of logic formulated by a 14th-century Franciscan, William of Occam, and loosely rendered, "the simplest explanation is the best"), often stronger than logic itself. Marine biologist Barry Fell claims to see a linguistic connection between the languages of native American and Mediterranean peoples. (He traces words of the New Mexican Zuni to the racy colloquial language used on Libyan naval vessels.) Historian Cyclone Covey asserts that a cache of lead crosses and swords found in Arizona in 1924 are the remains of an eighth-century Roman-Jewish colony (the only remains, incidentally). How these wanderers got to the Sunbelt, and where they came from, where they lived and where they went—all basic questions that a scientist would ask—remain unanswered. The "only real question," Williams asserts, "is how the unknown hoaxer (and I do not have any suspects) planted the artifacts so successfully . . . and left so little evidence of the intrusion."

The painstaking work of archaeology is just too boring

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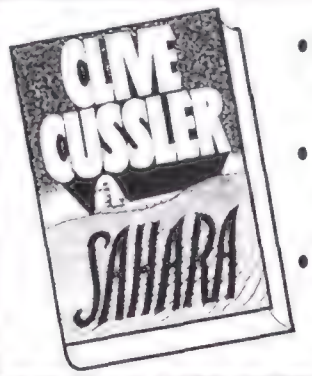

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Awkward Latin engravings raised doubts about Tucson's "Roman-Jewish" swords.

for these "rogue professors." Rogue professors, the author explains, are like rogue elephants: they "have all the degrees and academic trappings of other professors; they even write and publish in the manner of other professors . . . but they are not really what they seem."

What these eccentrics require is startling discovery and dramatic, often bizarre, explanation. Geographer George F. Carter uses misdated human skeletal material to support his claim that mankind has inhabited the New World for some 100,000 years—rather than the widely accepted 10,000 or so—an idea that dovetails nicely with a theory posited by anthropologist Jeffrey Goodman. Goodman claims to have used psychic powers to locate an ancient human site in Arizona. There, at the bottom of a 30-foot test pit near Flagstaff, he came upon two stones that he and his followers describe as among the "most important artifacts ever found." A stone discovered in 1979 (possibly one of the Flagstaff stones) Goodman believes to be the oldest written document in the world. North America thus was the cradle of human civilization: Homo sapiens left Eden—Southern California—more than 30,000 years ago and wandered westward across the Bering Strait to colonize the world.

Whoever said that truth is stranger than fiction?

Karl Ackerman, based in Charlottesville, Virginia, is preparing a new edition of a 19th-century work on Maya ruins.

Additional reading

Smithsonian horizons (p. 8)

"Contributions of Bird Studies to Biology" by Masakazu Konishi et al., *Science*, October 27, 1989

"From Bird Song to Neurogenesis" by Fernando Nottebohm, *Scientific American*, February 1989

Object at hand (p. 17)

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Nez Perce National Forest (p. 32)

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René Magritte (p. 48)

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The Vanderbilts and the Gilded Age: Architectural Aspiration, 1879-1901 by John Foreman and Robbe Pierce Stimson, St. Martin's Press, 1991

The Vanderbilts by Jerry Patterson, Harry N. Abrams, 1989

The Architecture of Richard Morris

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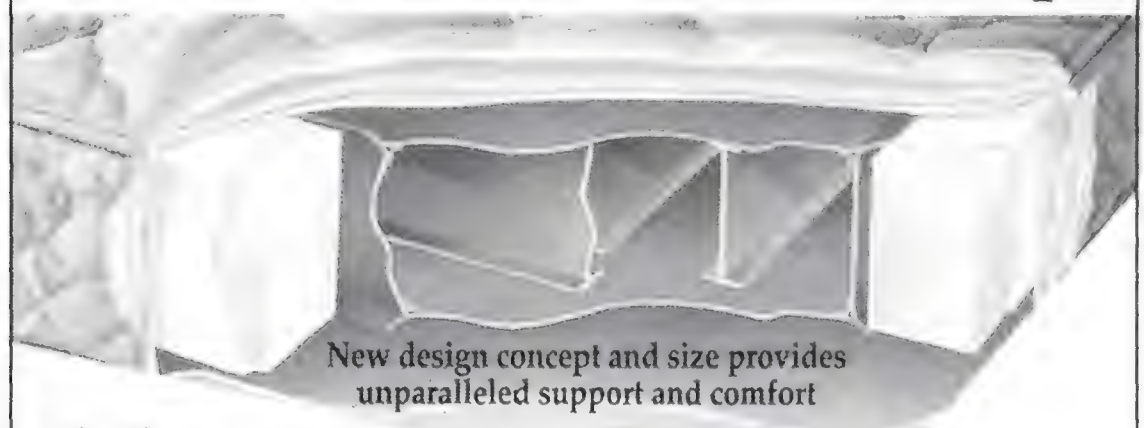

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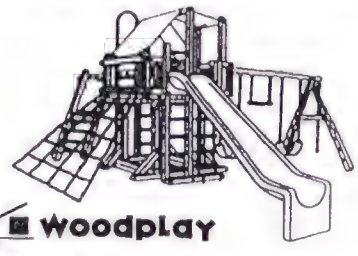

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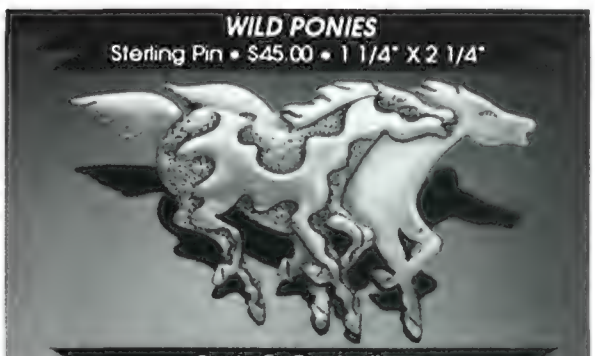

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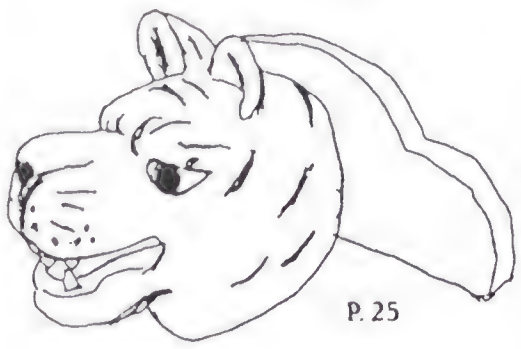

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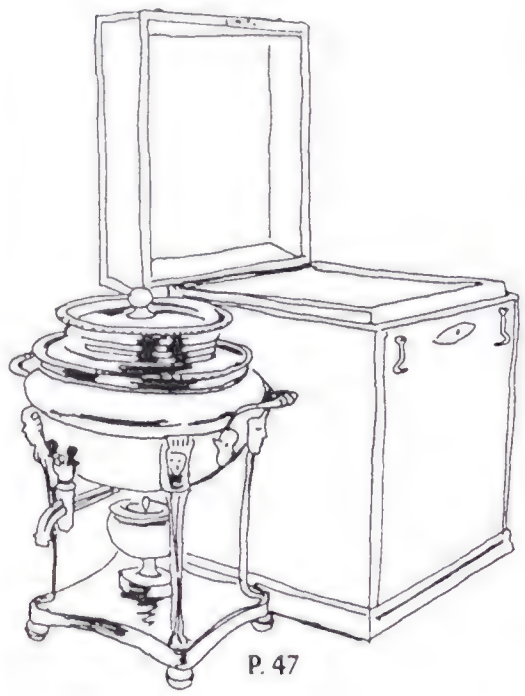

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The National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of American History and National Museum of Natural History are operating on extended summer hours, from 9:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. daily, through Labor Day, Monday, September 7. Regular hours, 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., resume Tuesday, September 8. Extended summer hours continue at the National Zoological Park as follows: 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. for the animal buildings, through September 15; 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. for grounds, through October 15.

Freer remains closed

The Freer Gallery of Art is closed until May 9, 1993.

National Hispanic Heritage Month

The Smithsonian celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15-October 15, with a variety of programs and activities. For information,

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Special September exhibits, events

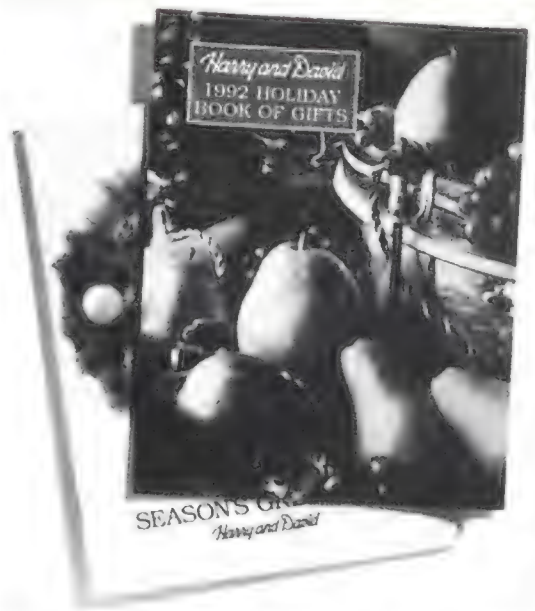
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Ancient Japan (through November 1) Exhibition of 258 objects presents the evolution of early Japanese culture. See *Highlights continued*, page 146.
Arts of Mughal India (through December 6) Paintings and objects from the late 16th to the 18th century trace the history of India's Mughal Empire.

National Museum of African Art
Recent Acquisitions/New Dimensions (through January 3, 1993) Etchings, linocuts, watercolors and ceramics by nine modern artists from Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and Kenya.
Purpose and Perfection: Pottery as a Woman's Art in Central Africa Permanent exhibition features the museum's Central African pottery collection.

Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden
Directions—Tim Rollins and K.O.S.: Animal Farm (September 17-December 6) Artist Rollins and K.O.S. ("Kids of Survival," his students from the South Bronx) join students from Washington, D.C. to create timely barnyard mural inspired by George Orwell's 1945 book.
Crosscurrents of Modernism: Four Latin American Pioneers (through September 7) Works by artists Diego Rivera, Joaquín Torres-García, Wifredo Lam and Matta.

National Air and Space Museum
Star Trek (through January 31, 1993) Show marks 25th anniversary of the famed television series. Passes required daily; call (202) 786-2122 for details.
Legend, Memory and the Great War in the Air Permanent installation looks at the reality of aviation in World War I.

National Museum of American History
American Women in War (September 1-February 1, 1993) Showcase exhibit examines the longstanding presence of women in war—from Revolutionary War cooks to Persian Gulf pilots.
American Encounters (runs indefinitely) The American Indian, Hispanic and Anglo-American cultures of New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande Valley.
First Ladies: Political Role and Public Image Permanent exhibition looks at the various roles of our nation's First Ladies.



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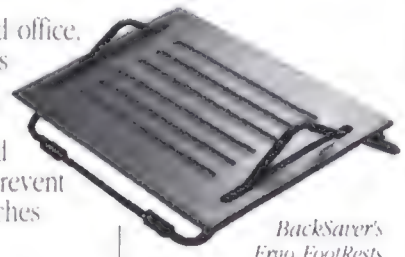

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National Museum of Natural History
Seeds of Change (through May 23, 1993) Exhibit explores the dramatic changes brought about by the exchange, begun 500 years ago, of five "seeds" between the Old World and the New.
Life in the Ancient Seas Permanent installation features a simulation of a 230-million-year-old reef.

National Portrait Gallery
The Spirit of Party: Hamilton and Jefferson at Odds (September 11-February 7, 1993) Show celebrating 250th anniversary of Jefferson's birth examines the conflict between the two statesmen.
Noble Heritage: Five Centuries of Portraits from the Hosokawa Family (through November 29) Portraits, from the 14th to the 19th century, of members of this prominent Japanese family.

National Museum of American Art
Ralph Eugene Meatyard: An American Visionary (through October 18) Unconventional, expressionistic images by the innovative photographer.
Helen Levitt (through October 18) Works, from the 1930s through the '70s, by one of the masters of 20th-century American photography.

Renwick Gallery
American Crafts: The Nation's Collection (September 25-January 10, 1993) Exhibition honoring the Renwick's 20th anniversary showcases more than 120 objects that span the development of crafts in the 20th century. Works in glass, clay, metal, fiber and wood.

Anacostia Museum
To Achieve These Rights: The Struggle for Equality and Self-Determination in the District of Columbia, 1791-1978 (through November 1) Exhibition examines the struggle by black people to secure equal rights in the nation's capital.

Arts and Industries Building Experimental Gallery
The Kids Bridge (September 30-March 1, 1993) Hands-on interactive exhibit from the Children's Museum of Boston explores issues of identity, ethnicity, race and racism.

Exhibition catalogs

Catalogs available currently include:
Crosscurrents of Modernism: Four Latin American Pioneers ($60/$29.95 paper)
Noble Heritage: Five Centuries of Por-

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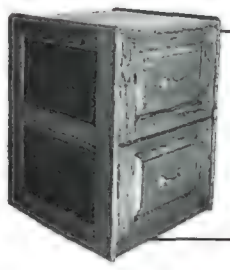

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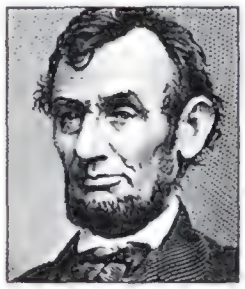

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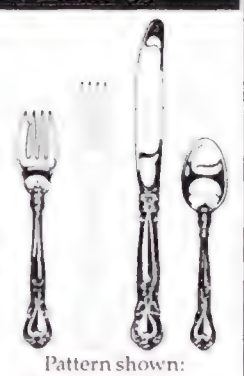

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Resident Associate Program

To become a Resident Associate, or for fee and ticket information, call (202) 357-3030. September events include:
Spanish Dance with the Master—José Greco and Company (September 27; 2:30 P.M. and 7:30 P.M.) Performance of flamenco, classical and folk dances.
Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan: The Search for Who We Are (September 22; 8 P.M.) The two renowned scientists discuss life on Earth and their own lives in science.
Cousteau's Great White Shark (September 23; 6 P.M.) Jean-Michel Cousteau shares the results of his research.

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

SITES organizes and circulates exhibitions to cities throughout the United States and abroad. To sponsor a show in your community, write SITES, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. 20560. Here are some September exhibits:
• Ann Arbor, Michigan (September 21-October 22) *Capturing the Spirit: Portraits of Contemporary Mexican Artists,* Ann Arbor Public Library.
• Los Angeles, California (September 9-October 13) *Seeds of Change* (panel exhibition based on the NMNH show), Los Angeles Public Library.
• New York, New York (September 23-January 3, 1993) *Songs of My People,* Museum of the City of New York.

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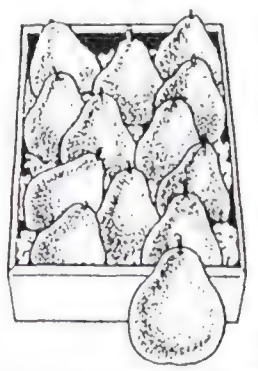

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Highlights continued

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Organized in cooperation with Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, the exhibition features 258 artifacts—of stone, clay, wood, bone, lacquer and bronze—from 63 sites. Most of the objects have been discovered in the past two decades, and many have never been shown abroad.

From the simple beauty of primitive stone tools that may date back to 200,000 B.C., to the haunting countenances of the large clay *haniwa* figures that once graced the burial mounds of the Kofun period, A.D. 250-600, the artifacts on exhibit stand as testimony to the artistic and technological achievements of Japan's indigenous cultures, and reflect the diversity, inventiveness and richness of the nation's ancient past.

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2. China *September-October* Several tours.

3. Black Sea Cruise *September 20-October 3*

4. Paradors of Spain *September 26-October 9*

5. NEW Sojourn in Asia Minor *September 28-October 11*

6. Himalayan Kingdoms *October 1-19* Nepal, Bhutan and Ladakh.

7. Soviet Union Transformed *October 7-17*

8. NEW Battlefields of France and Belgium *October 9-22*

9. NEW Columbus Atlantic Crossing *October 18-November 5* Aboard the *Sea Cloud.*

10. Copper Canyon (Mexico) *October 23-30*

11. NEW Cultural Japan *October 25-November 7*

12. Mexico Folk Art *October 27-November 8*

13. NEW Borneo and Indonesia Cruise *October 27-November 15*

14. London Interlude *October 29-November 7*

15. NEW Hidden India *October 29-November 22*

16. NEW Columbus in the Caribbean *November 4-14* Aboard the *Sea Cloud.*

17. Moscow and St. Petersburg *November 8-17*

18. Christmas in Winchester *December 17-28*

19. City Interludes *January-April* Off-season tours of London, Paris, Prague, Tibet, Florence, Hong Kong, St. Petersburg, Venice, Edinburgh, Kyoto and Vienna.

20. Yucatán Adventure *January 5-17*

21. Tanzania *January 5-24*

22. Baroque Winter (Austria) *January 6-16*

23. Patagonian Andes (Chile and Argentina) *January 9-22*

24. India Wildlife *January 17-February 11*

25. Oaxaca Countryside (Mexico) *January 29-February 8*

26. NEW Western Caribbean Cruise *February 1-12*

27. Whale Watching in the Dominican Republic *February 6-16*

28. Far East Adventure *February 6-26* Singapore to Thailand.

29. The Island of Dominica *February 10-18*

30. Lapland Reindeer Safari *February 21-March 2*

31. Guatemala Adventure *February 23-March 8*

32. Bermuda *March* Cultural and natural history.

33. Alpine Snow Train *March 4-16*

34. Australia and New Zealand *March 4-25*

35. NEW From Singapore to India's Malabar Coast *March 5-23*

36. NEW China-Japan Cruise *March 15-April 2* Aboard the *Royal Viking Queen.*

37. NEW Central Mexico Archaeology *March 17-29*

38. Copper Canyon (Mexico) *March 30-April 6*

39. Dutch Waterways Cruise *April 12-25*

40. Nile Cruise *April 12-29*

41. French Castles and Cathedrals *April 16-26*

42. Galápagos Islands *April 17-28* Aboard the *Isabela II.*

43. Morocco *April 17-May 1*

Domestic Study Tours

44. Smithsonian "Anytime" Weekend (Washington, D.C.) New low prices from $99 per person for a two-night package.

45. Grand Canyon Weekend *September 24-27 or October 8-10*

46. NEW Crow Canyon Archaeology (Colorado) *September 27-October 3*

47. NEW California's National Parks *October 4-12*

48. NEW Chesapeake Birds *October 25-November 2*

49. Christmas in Williamsburg *December 10-13*

50. Christmas at the Smithsonian *December 17-20*

51. Christmas in Santa Fe *December 20-27*

52. NEW Rocky Mountain New Year's for Families *December 26-January 1*

53. Florida Springs *January 30-February 3*

54. Yellowstone *February 13-20* Cross-country skiing.

55. South Texas Birds *February 13-20*

56. Baja Whale Watch *February 25-March 3*

57. Virgin Islands Cruise *February 27-March 5*

58. New Orleans/Natchez *March*

59. Hawaii Camping *March*

60. NEW New York Arts *March 4-7*

61. Gulf Cruise: Miami to New Orleans *March 13-27*

62. South Florida Birds *March 20-27*

63. Sea of Cortez Cruise *March 21-29*

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64. Low-cost tours *1992-93* Great Britain, Italy, France, Greece, Israel-Egypt, Portugal-Spain-Morocco, Canada, Belize-Guatemala, Alps and the United States. Six tours to Costa Rica will also be offered in 1992-93. For an Odyssey brochure only, call 1-800-932-8287.

Smithsonian Seminars

65. American Avant-Garde (New York) *September 29-October 3* Tour Greenwich Village.

Write to Smithsonian National Associate Program, Washington, DC 20560 or call (202) 357-4700 for tour and seminar brochures.

SMITHSONIAN-STYLE

66. Civil War in Atlanta *October 8-11*

67. Catalina Island Ecology (California) *October 11-16*

68. Northwest Crafts (Seattle) *October 13-18*

69. Antietam *October 15-18*

70. Seminars in Santa Fe *October 18-22* Archaeology, literature and art, or cooking.

71. Women of the West (Santa Fe) *October 28-31* Meet artists, writers. Visit Taos.

72. History of Photography (France) *November 1-10* Explore private and museum collections.

73. The Power of Maps (New York) *November 7-11* Study at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

74. Gettysburg *November 11-14*

75. American Art (Washington, D.C.) *December 3-6 or December 10-13*

76. American Popular Music (New Orleans) *December 5-9* With pianist John Eaton.

77. Western Civilization (Washington, D.C.) *January 10-13 or January 24-27*

78. Blacks in Aviation (Washington, D.C.) *February 4-6*

Research Expeditions

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79. Washington, D.C. *January 3-16 or January 24-February 6* Work with documents about native Americans.

80. Yucatán *February 21-March 3* Help band and inventory bird life.

81. Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles *March 6-21* Excavate remains of giant tortoises.

82. Washington, D.C. *March 21-April 3* Help develop a Smithsonian exhibition on American musical theater.

83. Costa Rica *April 17-29* Monitor an active volcano.

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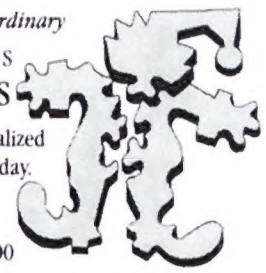

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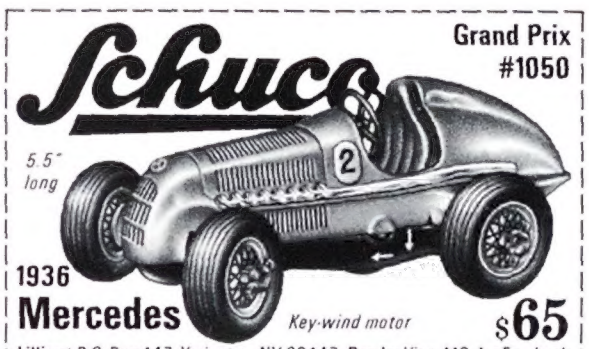

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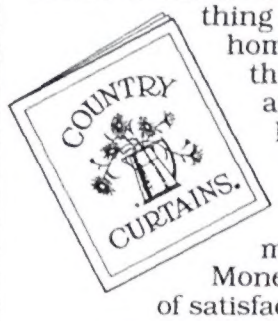

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By Elaine Segal

Ouch! Sometimes it hurts to bring up the past

"I just got back from a session with a past-lives therapist," says my friend Eva, "and you know that neck problem I've had for years?"

"Let me guess," I say. "You were hanged."

"Nope," says Eva. "Guillotined! It was really something—you've got to try it."

"I was sort of hoping not to get executed," I say wistfully.

"Don't play dumb," Eva says. "I know, I'll give you a regression for your birthday! You'll see."

I make an appointment with the past-lives therapist to be regressed the following week. In the meantime, I am to make a list of my aversions. These could provide clues to pivotal events in my previous lives. I have no problem identifying them: getting up in the morning, any type of marine conveyance, and those scenes in movies where people falling in love throw Frisbees as a cute dog rushes back and forth.

The therapist shows me to a comfortable couch and asks me what issue has come up in my present life that merits a look at my previous existence. I explain that I don't believe in reincarnation and would like to find out why. The therapist giggles and says that this "will be fun." Although I have undoubtedly lived many lives, she explains, we will explore the most recent that might shed some light on my current skepticism. She tells me to lie down and shut my eyes.

Five minutes into the regression I know I'm in trouble. Although I am being asked to do two simple things, relax and respond to guided imagery, these are the two things that I am least good at. When I am asked to say what I see as I walk down a long, winding path, I draw a blank. "Nothing," I say.

"Is it dark or light?" asks the therapist patiently.

This is easier to answer since my eyes are shut. "It's dark," I reply.

"Good. Now, when I snap my fingers, you will be on the bank of a river. There is a small boat there, and I want you to imagine getting into it."

"I hate boats," I say.

"Just get in and start paddling," says the therapist. "Tell me when the boat is drawn to the shore."

"OK," I say, and picture myself fretfully paddling down the stream.

"Are you at the shore yet?" asks the therapist.

"Not yet," I say, and continue to paddle. I am beginning to feel bored, as I always do in boats.

The therapist sighs. "When I snap my fingers, you will be on shore, out of the boat." She snaps her fingers. "All right, where are you?" she asks.

"On a couch."

"Please try to imagine that you have just stepped out of a boat and are on a strange, yet familiar, shore."

I strain to cooperate. Into the blankness of my mind comes some mud, some trees, some grass. "I got it," I say.

"Good," says the therapist, "Look at your feet. What do they look like?"

Miraculously, into my mind's eye comes a set of feet. "They're bare," I say. "And dirty. And really big."

"What are you wearing?"

I look down at my outfit. "A sort of tunic and a rope belt."

"Now start walking. Tell me whatever you see or hear."

"I hear an answering machine."

"Don't pay any attention to it," says the therapist. "Do you see any buildings?"

Architecture is not my strong suit. Desperately, I rummage through my mind for a building. Success! I remember a village from a painting I saw yesterday. "Little white buildings with red roofs," I say proudly. "It looks like a 15th-century Italian village."

"Any people?"

My spirits sink. "No," I say.

"How do you feel?" asks the therapist.

"Totally baffled; really, really stupid."

"Are you drunk?"

"Certainly not."

"Have you been hit on the head?"

Suddenly I see my head! It is flat on top with the apelike face from the cover of a pamphlet on creationism I found on my way here. "I can see my face!" I say. "I'm like an animal!"

"Have you always felt this way?"

"Yes," I say, picturing myself scratching my head. Suddenly, a gang of urchins appears and throws stones at me. "Hey," I say, "I think I might be the village idiot!"

"Good," says the therapist. "Now when I snap my fingers, you are going to go to the last important event in that lifetime. OK, where are you?"

I am getting the hang of this. "A dungeon," I say definitively.

"How do you feel?"

"Miserable. There's a ball and chain attached to my leg, and I seem to have some kind of terrible skin disorder." My stomach growls in my present existence. "And I'm hungry," I add.

"Do you have any food?"

"There's a dog dish next to me on the floor, but it's empty," I say sadly.

"Now you're going to go to the time of your death. OK, where are you?"

"Still in the dungeon. Lying on a filthy pile of straw. I feel like I'm dying."

"Good. Now when I snap my fingers, you will be released from that lifetime. Open your eyes. How do you feel?"

"Like an idiot."

The therapist nods sympathetically. "It's not uncommon to carry emotional baggage from one life to another."

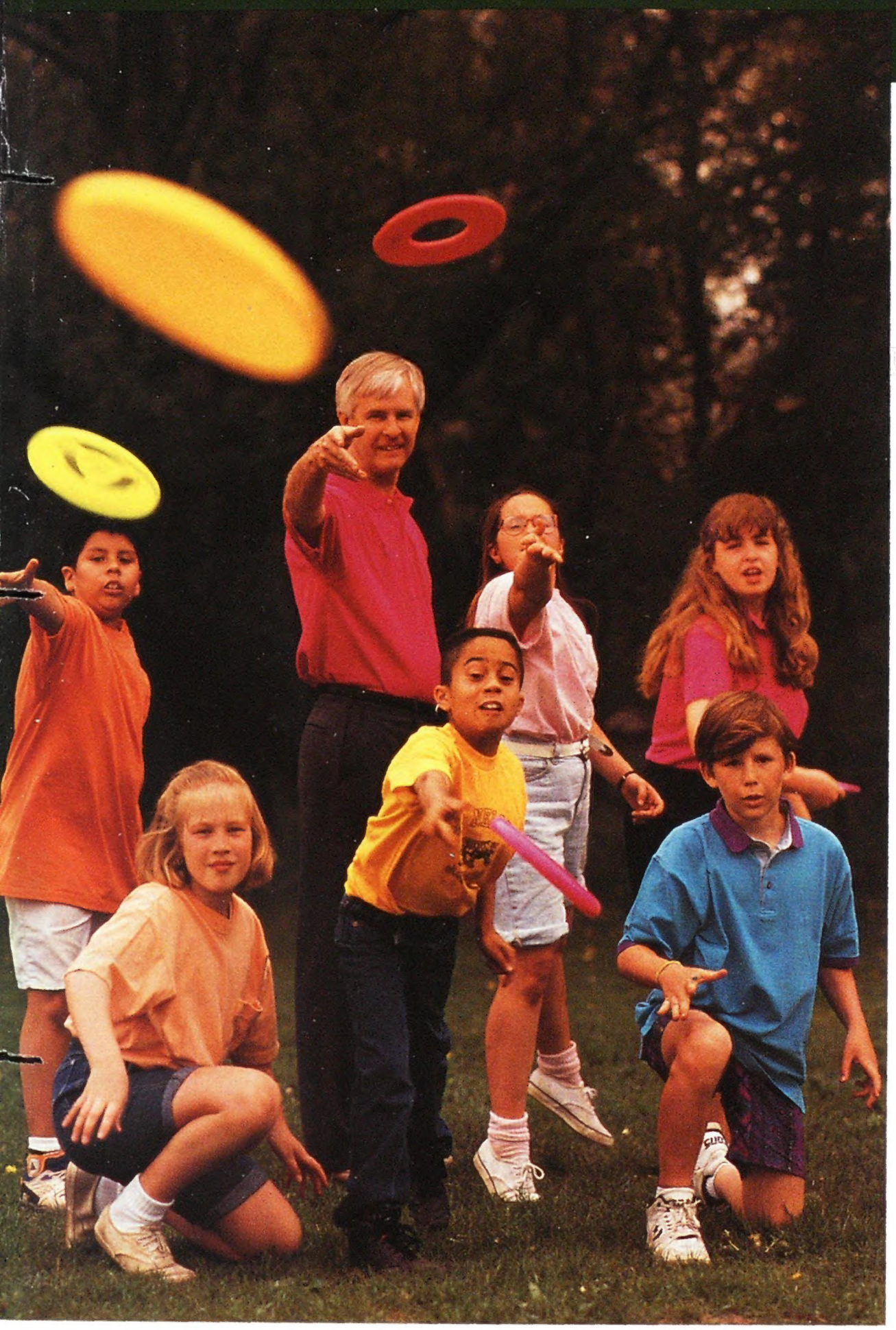
"Well?" says Eva.

"I was a village idiot in the Middle Ages and died in a dungeon."

"That makes perfect sense!" cries my friend. "No wonder you've been denying your past life—it was dysfunctional!"

"Thank heavens there's an explanation for everything," I say.

Welcome To Mr. Burtch's Science Lab.



This isn't recess. It's Bob Burtch's fifth grade science class.

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